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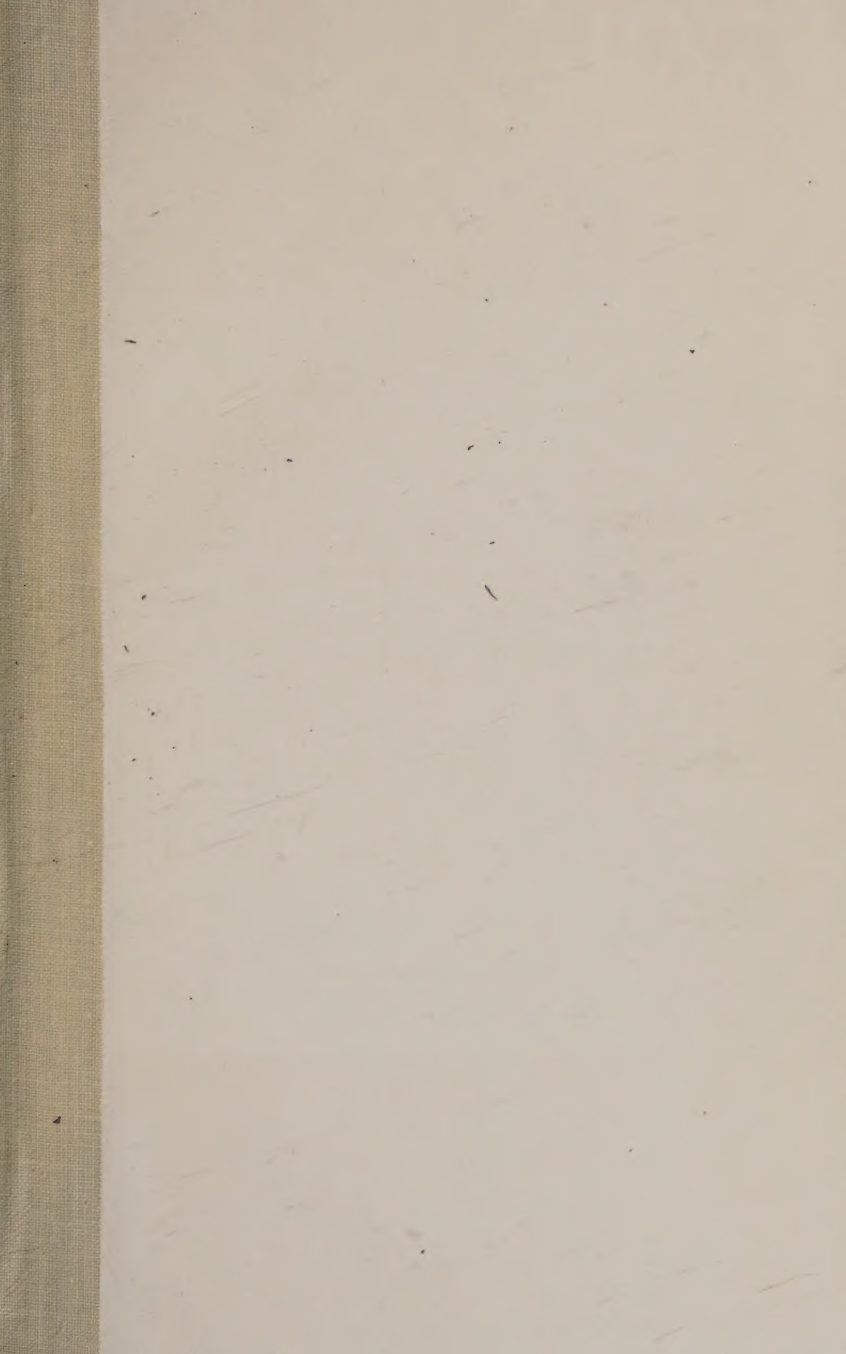
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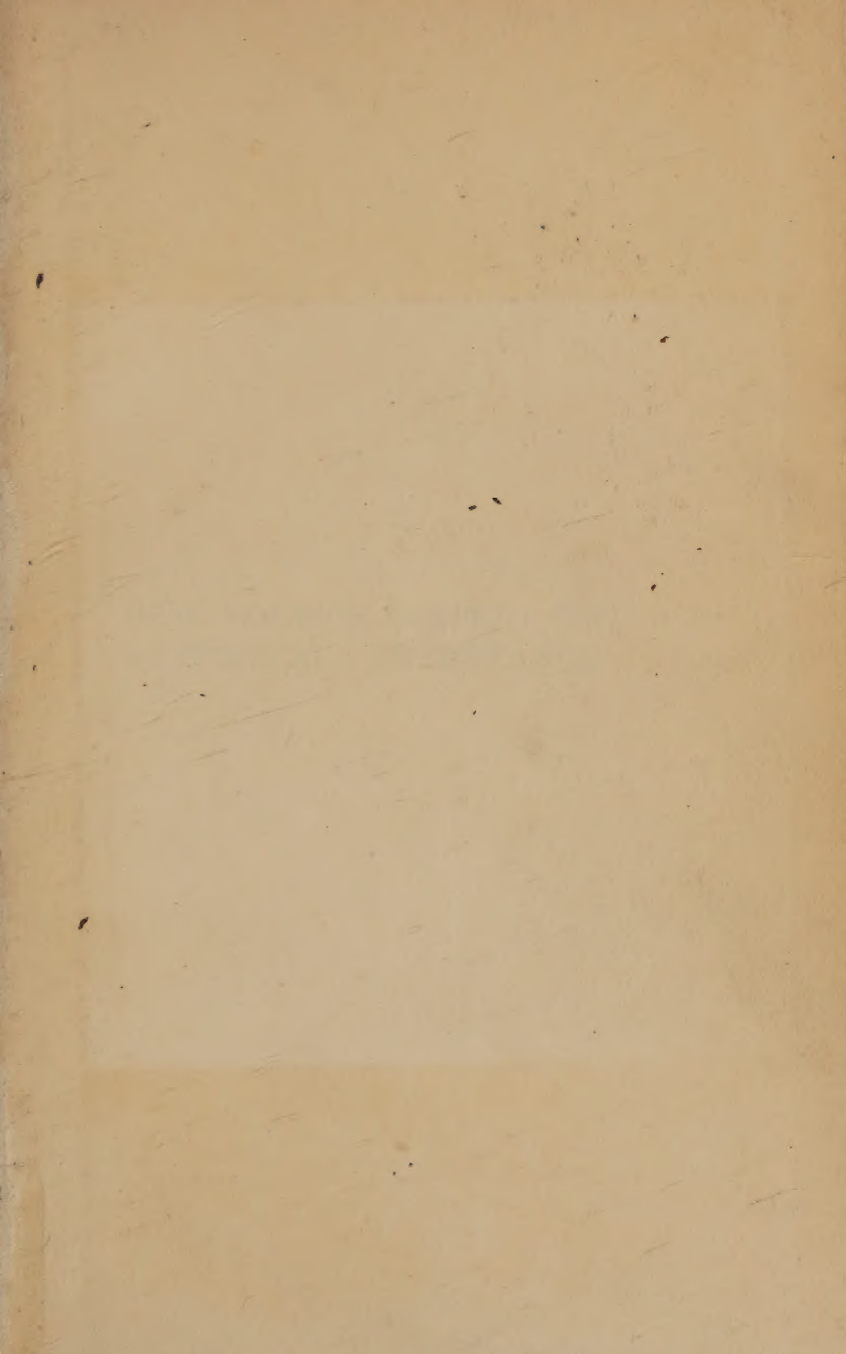
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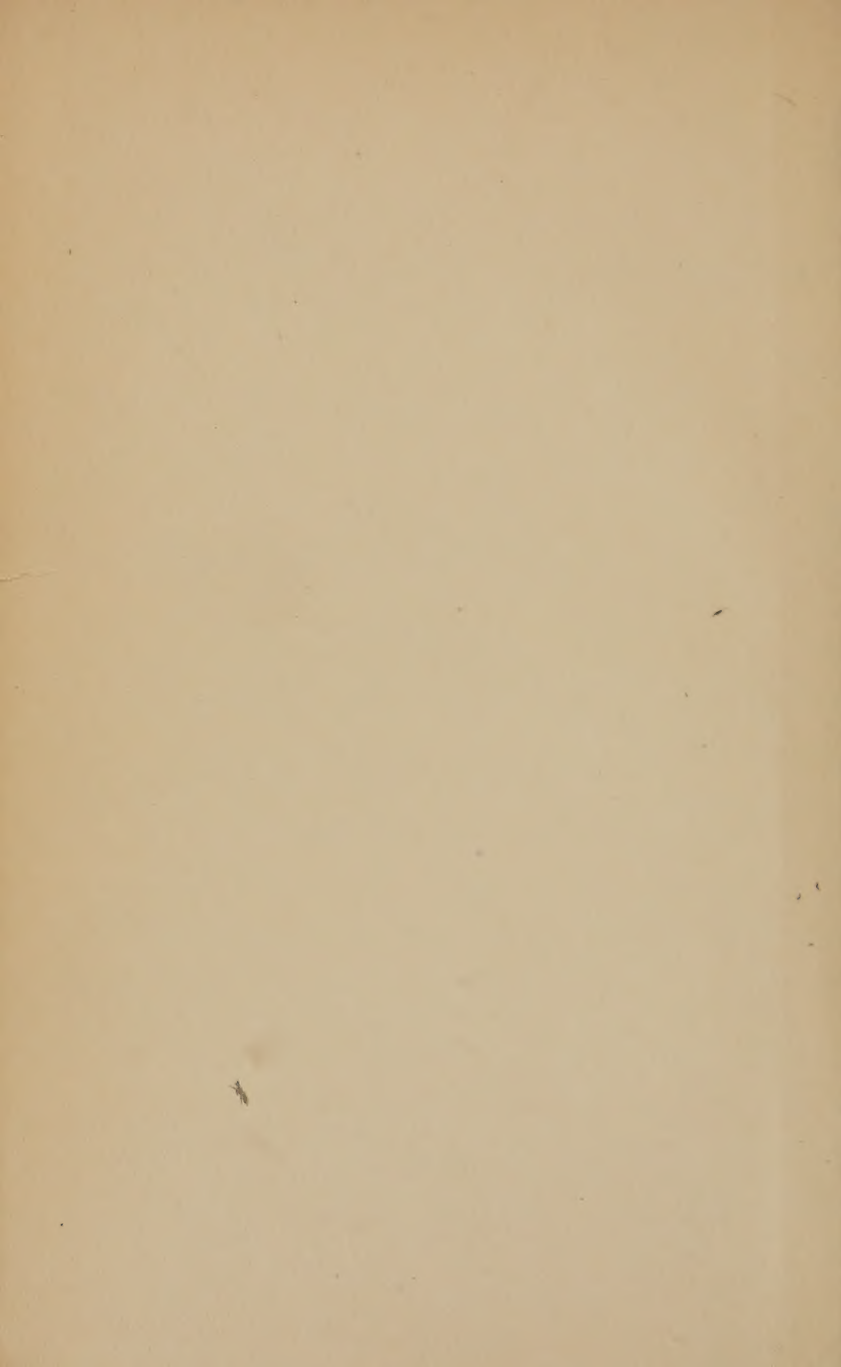
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THE FOURTH GOSPEL: ITS  
HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE







# THE FOURTH GOSPEL: ITS HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE

*Philip  
Hornon*  
BY

P. V. SMITH, M.A., LL.D.

CHANCELLOR OF THE DIOCESES OF MANCHESTER, DURHAM, AND RIPON  
SOMETIME FELLOW OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

WITH PREFACE BY

JAMES MAURICE WILSON, D.D.

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## PREFACE

THE Chancellor of my old Diocese of Manchester has done me the great honour to ask me to write a Preface to this book. Its aim and its effect are to demand, from critics and all readers of the New Testament, a reconsideration of the historical value of the Fourth Gospel, and to raise the estimate that must be formed of that value.

A Preface is not a Criticism. For criticism I am not qualified. What, then, is it? In this case it should, I think, be (1) a brief statement of the subject dealt with in the book; (2) an estimate of the qualifications of the writer for dealing with it; (3) an outline of the method he has employed or the results he has arrived at; and (4) some remarks on the timeliness and need for its publication.

(1) First, then, as to the subject dealt with.

The general impression left on the present educated public by the last half-century or more of close study of the origin, sources, authorship and aims of the Four Gospels is that the first three Gospels are earlier in date of compilation than the Fourth, that they are closely interrelated, and that they embody a document of much earlier date

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(commonly referred to as Q), even some memoranda probably contemporary with the incidents and sayings reported ; and that the Fourth Gospel, while considerably later in date of compilation, contains some precious memories of a disciple of very advanced age at the time of compilation, and that it was written in order to give a fresh presentation of the Gospel adapted to the needs of the cultivated Greek world. This view carried with it the inference that, in matters of historic fact, the Synoptic Gospels must generally speaking be preferred, and that they probably give the sayings of our Lord more nearly as they were spoken ; but that it is the Fourth Gospel which gives a later and profounder view of the Gospel message, to meet the needs of a wider and educated Greek audience.

The aim, then, of this book is to call for a reconsideration in one respect of this verdict. It aims at proving that the historical value of the Fourth Gospel has been unduly disparaged, and that it is higher than the value assigned to it at the present time by many scholars.

A general reaction in the historical criticism of the New Testament is taking place ; and while a higher historical value is being gradually assigned to the Synoptic Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, this book heralds a further extension of this reaction, partly initiated by the work of the late Professor Burney, as to the historical value of the Fourth

Gospel also. This is, therefore, a book that cannot be ignored by students.

(2) What are the qualifications of the author for publishing his investigation of so complex an historical question ?

Chancellor P. V. Smith is known to the world as an ecclesiastical lawyer and judge of the highest rank. He is known to his friends as a deeply religious man. He has now shown himself as a careful biblical student, mastering and arranging the details of a many-sided problem with the thoroughness and lucidity of the lawyer, the impartiality of the judge, and the patience and reverence of the devout scholar. It must be admitted that he cannot have given to the study of texts and languages and critical literature the time that professed New Testament students such as Canon Streeter and the late Professor Burney and others have been able to give. But his profession and temperament have trained him to judge of the value of evidence. He knows how to use the learning, and to weigh the arguments and opinions of others. He is one from whom we may expect not the one-sided arguments of a special pleader or a crank, but the balanced words of a judge.

(3) What are the results arrived at ? It is too soon to say anything on this point. The aim of the writer being to urge reconsideration of a matter, the results are in the hands of his readers, and await the future. While I entirely disclaim the

attitude of a critic, I can, however, confidently say that he gives good *primâ facie* grounds for such a reconsideration.

Under this head, it will be not unfitting to indicate how Professor Burney's results, used in this volume to demonstrate the probability that the original language of parts of the Gospel was Aramaic, bear on its historical value. Taken in connection with the many indications that the writer was a Jew, and knew Jerusalem well, and was an eye-witness of some of the scenes related, this fact justifies, or even necessitates, the inference that the parts of the Gospel so translated were not written at Ephesus at the close of the first century, but long before, possibly at Jerusalem, at a very early, even contemporary, date. Those portions of the Gospel may have been translated from the Aramaic into Greek, and edited with some explanatory notes, anywhere and at any time; but as historic evidence they date from the time that they were first written. There may, therefore, be a hitherto unsuspected Q latent in the Fourth, as well as that latent in the First and Third Gospels.

This hypothesis suggests several interesting consequences. Fragmentary and detached notes in Aramaic may have been arranged in our Greek Gospel in not quite the correct historical order. This would explain some apparent dislocations. This volume and its appendix give several examples to show how some slight rearrangements elucidate



the argument or sequence of thought. Also, since the vocabulary of Aramaic is much smaller than that of Greek, the translation may have been incorrect. The present Greek text suggests a certain original to an Aramaic scholar; but when he has got it, he could translate it into Greek in more than one way. Examples are given of this.

When the Gospel is read with this theory present in the mind, many details assume a new interest. To give one example: "*There is in Jerusalem by the sheep-market a pool*" (St. John v. 2). We may have read that verse (as I have read it) many hundred times, and never wondered why the writer did not say "*There was,*" instead of "*There is.*"

(4) It remains to speak of the timeliness of its publication. Happily on this subject little need be said. The Primate has lately dwelt on the need for the clergy to improve their sermons by more and wider study. Now, I have not only listened to, or at least heard, some 2,000 sermons, and written and preached some 2,000 more, but I have had the unique—privilege, shall I say?—as Archdeacon of Manchester for fifteen years, of reading and commenting on to the writers of some 2,000 more, preached by the deacons in the Diocese, and offered by them, each doubtless selecting his four best, at the Bishop's Examination for Priest's Orders. I can confidently say that the two last groups of sermons would have been con-



siderably better had their writers known and enjoyed this book as I, now alas! too late, have done. It does not give materials for sermons ready made; heaven forbid! but it adds fresh point to the study of the Gospels, and therefore to the realisation of the life and teaching of our Lord. It will make the preacher more interested in his study, and therefore more interesting in his pulpit. I should have added it to the very short list of books that, when I was asked for advice, I recommended to our young clergy. And what is wholesome for them is wholesome for all.

JAMES M. WILSON.

*October, 1925.*

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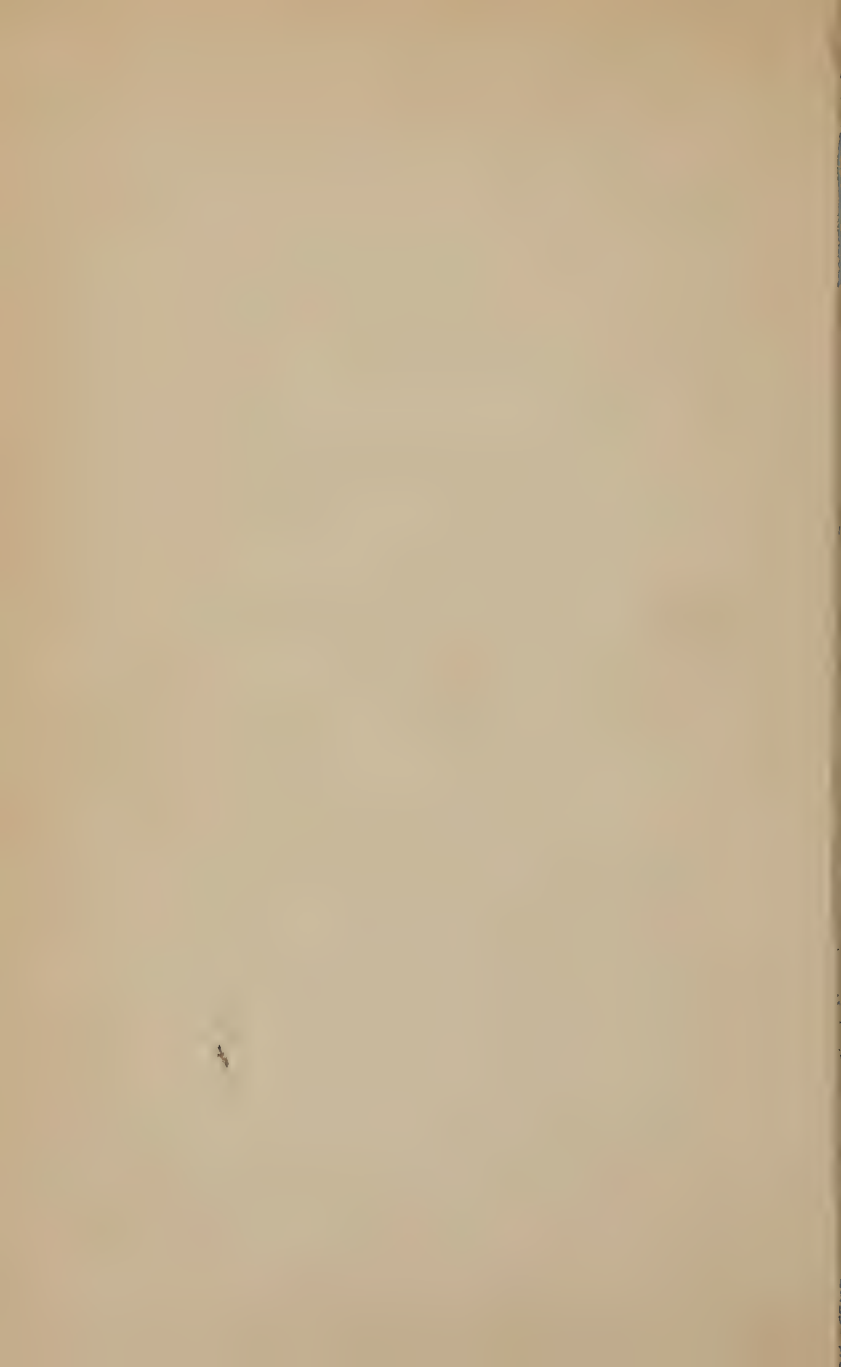
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# THE FOURTH GOSPEL

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

THE present treatise is an endeavour to determine the historical value of the Fourth Gospel by the same tests as would be applied to decide the credibility of any other document purporting to be historical. In the case of any such document we should inquire :

(1) Who was its author, and whether he was an eye-witness or contemporary of the incidents which he professes to record, and what connection, if any, he had with those incidents ;

(2) What is the style of the document and what interval of time elapsed between the events which it purports to narrate and the date of its composition ;

(3) With what object it was written ;

(4) How far its contents are coherent in themselves, and consistent with other records which we possess of the scenes which it describes ; and

(5) Whether it was accepted as historical at the time at which it was put forth.

In the case of the Fourth Gospel, the fourth head of our inquiry will, of course, lead to a comparison between its contents and those of the Synoptic Gospels. Inasmuch as our investigation deals only with its own historical value and does not extend to the general credibility of the Gospel narratives, those other Gospels will, except where the contrary is expressly pointed out, be assumed to be of substantial historical accuracy.

## CHAPTER II

### AUTHOR OF THE GOSPEL

THE Gospel of St. John is the only one of the four Gospels in which it is distinctly stated that the author was himself present at some of the scenes which he describes. Whether we owe the First Gospel as a whole, or any part of it, to the Apostle whose name it bears is a matter of controversy ; but, at any rate, there is no indication in the Gospel itself that St. Matthew had a hand in its composition ; unless we regard as such the fact that the publican, whom our Lord called, is in that Gospel named Matthew (ch. ix. 9, x. 3), and no mention is made of his being the host at the subsequent feast ; whereas the other Synoptists give the name of Levi to the publican, and mention him as the giver of the feast (Mark ii. 14-16 ; Luke v. 27-29).

The same may be said with respect to St. Mark as regards the Second Gospel, and (except, perhaps, in respect of the closing scenes of our Lord's life) it has never been suggested that the author of it wrote any of its contents from his own personal knowledge of them. As to the Third Gospel, St. Luke distinctly declares in the preface to it, that he has derived its contents from eye-witnesses ;

implying, therefore, that he was not himself one of them. But the contemporary editor of the Fourth Gospel distinctly affirms at its close (ch. xxi. 24), and at any rate, until quite modern times, it has generally been accepted, that the writer of the Gospel was the person who is therein referred to as the disciple whom Jesus loved. Internal evidence clearly shows that he was a Jew of Palestine. He was thoroughly acquainted with the trend of thought of the Jerusalem Rabbis. Where in the Old Testament the Septuagint differs from the Hebrew, his quotations from it, with one or two exceptions, follow the Hebrew. He is intimately acquainted with the topography of Jerusalem and of Palestine generally. He names and locates the places where incidents which he narrates occurred. John was baptising in Bethany, or Bethabara, beyond Jordan (ch. i. 28), and afterwards in Ænon, near to Salim (ch. iii. 23). At Jerusalem the pool of Bethesda was by the sheep gate and had five porches (ch. v. 2). Bethany was distant from Jerusalem about fifteen furlongs (ch. xi. 18). After the raising of Lazarus Jesus withdrew to a city called Ephraim (ch. xi. 54). The spot where He was arrested was a garden (ch. xviii. 1), and there was a garden close to where He was crucified (ch. xix. 41).

Tradition has uniformly given the name of the author as John, identifying him with the writer of the Epistles in the New Testament which are



ascribed to John ; and has pointed to Ephesus and the close of the first or beginning of the second century as the place and time at which the Gospel was put together. In addition to the testimony of Papias in the early part, and of Polycrates in the latter part, of the second century, which will be referred to presently, it will be sufficient to mention that of Irenæus in the second half of the same century, whom Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History* (Bk. V, ch. 8) quotes as saying, "Matthew indeed produced his Gospel written among the Hebrews in their own dialect, whilst Peter and Paul proclaimed the Gospel and founded the Church at Rome. After the departure of these, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, also transmitted to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. And Luke, the companion of Paul, committed to writing the Gospel preached by Paul. Afterwards John, the disciple of our Lord, the same that lay upon His bosom, also published the Gospel whilst he was yet at Ephesus in Asia."

Tradition has also generally identified the writer with the son of Zebedee, who bore that name. The two sons of Zebedee, James and John, with St. Peter, were the three Apostles whom our Lord most closely associated with Himself, as for instance, in the raising of Jairus's daughter, on the Mount of the Transfiguration, and at Gethsemane.

The early chapters of the Acts represent Peter and John (doubtless the son of Zebedee) together

taking at that time the lead among the Apostles on several occasions (Acts iii. 1, iv. 13, viii. 14); and in the Epistle to the Galatians St. Paul mentions that when he went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas seventeen years after his conversion, he was welcomed by James and Cephas and John, "who were reputed to be pillars" (ch. ii. 9, R.V.).

In the Fourth Gospel St. Peter and the beloved disciple are represented as having close relationship with one another, at the Last Supper (ch. xiii. 23, 24) and in their expedition to the tomb on the morning of the Resurrection (ch. xx. 2), and by the Lake of Galilee in the scene with which the Gospel closes (ch. xxi.). And we cannot reasonably doubt that it was the same disciple, though merely referred to as "another disciple," who being "known unto the high priest" obtained St. Peter's entrance into the high priest's palace (ch. xviii. 15, 16).

Moreover, in that last scene at the Lake of Galilee, the two sons of Zebedee are expressly mentioned as being present (ch. xxi. 2); and Bishop Westcott, taking for granted that the author of the Gospel must have known that the sons of Zebedee ranked next to St. Peter among the Apostles, remarked that, unless he had himself been one of them, he would have mentioned them before, instead of after, Thomas and Nathanael.

These are strong arguments for identifying the author of the Gospel with the younger son of Zebedee. But, on the other hand, there appear

to be even stronger reasons for doubting the identity. It is difficult to harmonise the character of the beloved disciple, who in his Gospel lays stress on our Lord's commands that we should love one another, and in his First Epistle insists, above all, on the duty of love, with the character of the younger of the sons of Zebedee, both of whom our Lord called "sons of thunder" (Mark iii. 17), and both of whom were ready to call down fire from heaven upon a Samaritan village (Luke ix. 54), and were eager for foremost places for themselves in our Lord's kingdom (Matt. xx. 20, 21; Mark x. 35-37); while the younger of them, John, took the lead in suppressing the casting out of devils by one who was not actually in their company (Mark ix. 38; Luke ix. 49).

Again, it is difficult to understand how a son of Zebedee, who was a Galilean fisherman, though, no doubt, a man of substance, since he was assisted in his fishing by hired servants, should have been known to the high priest and have been able not only himself to enter the high priest's palace without being challenged, but also to induce the portress to admit St. Peter. It is difficult also to understand how the younger son of Zebedee should have had a house of his own, apart from his brother and his mother (who, as we learn from Matt. xxvii. 56, was at that time in Jerusalem), to which he could take away our Lord's mother from the scene of the Crucifixion (John xix. 27). And,

observing how invariably the writer of the Gospel refers to himself merely as "a disciple," either with or without the addition "whom Jesus loved," it seems more natural to suppose that in the mention of those who met our Lord at the Lake of Galilee after the Resurrection he was one of the "two other of His disciples," and not one of "the sons of Zebedee" (ch. xxi. 2).

In Acts iv. 13 it is stated that when the Apostles Peter and John were arraigned for preaching to the people in the porch of the Temple, the Sanhedrin perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men (*ἄνθρωποι ἀγράμματοι καὶ ἰδιῶται*), that is to say, not learned in the Rabbinic lore (*γράμματα*) in which the Scribes and Pharisees of that day were steeped. (We are told that it was our Lord's familiarity with these *γράμματα* which excited the wonder of His opponents in His controversies with them in Jerusalem; John vii. 15.) Such men as the Apostles Peter and John were certainly capable of writing the Epistles which bear their names; but it is difficult to believe that either of them would have been likely to write, or even would have been capable of writing, the prologue to the Fourth Gospel. They had not had the Rabbinical training which enabled St. Paul to write such an argumentative treatise as the Epistle to the Romans.

Passing now from the New Testament to outside sources of information, the first testimony to be considered is that of Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, in

the early part of the second century, which is given to us by Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History*, Bk. III, ch. 39. He quotes Papias as saying, "If I met with anyone who had been a follower of the presbyters anywhere, I made it a point to inquire what were the sayings of the presbyters, what Andrew or Peter said (εἶπεν), or Philip or Thomas or James or John or Matthew, or any other of the disciples of our Lord; and also, what Aristion and John the presbyter say (λέγουσιν)."

Eusebius, who held the common traditional view that the Apostle John was the author of the Fourth Gospel, remarks on this: "Where it is also proper to observe that the name of John is twice mentioned;—the former of which he mentions with Peter and James and Matthew and the other Apostles, evidently meaning the evangelist. But in a separate part of his discourse, he ranks the other John with the rest not included in the number of the Apostles, placing Aristion before him. He distinguishes him plainly by the name of presbyter. So that it is here proved that the statement of those is true who assert that there were two of the same name in Asia, that there were also two tombs in Ephesus, and both are called John's even to this day, which it is particularly necessary to observe. For it is probable that the second, if it be not allowed that it was the first, saw the Revelation ascribed to John." The importance of this passage lies, not in the comments of Eusebius, who wrote



in the early part of the fourth century, but in the first-hand testimony of Papias, that there was in the Roman province of Asia, of which Ephesus was the capital, at the beginning of the second century, a presbyter named John, who had been a disciple of the Lord, and whose evidence as to the Lord's sayings and doings, although he was not an Apostle, was of equal value with that of the Apostles themselves. Clearly, then, it is possible that he may have been the author of the Fourth Gospel. And it is to be noticed that the writer of the Second and Third Epistles of John, who is almost certainly the author of the Fourth Gospel and also of the First Epistle, simply styles himself "the elder" or "the presbyter" (ὁ πρεσβύτερος), with no name attached. It is clear that the authorship of neither of these letters was intended to be concealed from its recipients, and that the writer, therefore, considered this designation sufficient to disclose it. And the designation was sufficient if the writer, who, as we know from the opening words of the First Epistle, had been a disciple of the Lord, was generally known as John the presbyter, but insufficient, and even misleading, if the writer was John the Apostle, when there was another individual, in the same city or region, commonly known as John the presbyter.

From the passages above cited it appears that Eusebius followed the general tradition that the Apostle John died in Ephesus at an advanced age.

But tradition on the point is not absolutely uniform. If this had been the case, we should have expected that Papias would have singled him out for special mention, instead of naming him, as we have seen, fourth in a group of five Apostles, of which the others were Philip, Thomas, James and Matthew. Moreover, the structure of the sentence and change of tense imply, that at the time when Papias wrote, John the Apostle, like the other Apostles with whom his name is coupled, was dead; whereas, the other John, the presbyter, who was also a disciple of the Lord, was still alive. Other writers attribute to Papias a definite statement that both James the Apostle and his brother John were killed by the Jews; and this view is adopted by Archdeacon Charles, who in his *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John* (vol. i, Introduction, pp. xlv-l) discusses at length the evidence on the subject and comes to the conclusion that the younger son of Zebedee was never in Asia Minor, and was not the author of any of the Johannine writings in the New Testament, but that he died a martyr's death between A.D. 64 and 70. So only could our Lord's prediction have been completely fulfilled that both the sons of Zebedee should drink the cup that He was about to drink (Matt. xx. 23; Mark x. 39). Dr. Charles considers that the Fourth Gospel and the three Epistles ascribed to John were written by the person of that name, who was known as "the



elder," the title by which he describes himself in the Second and Third Epistles, but that the Apocalypse was written by a different individual, though closely associated with him.

In a later chapter of his History (Bk. V, ch. 24) Eusebius quotes a remarkable statement of Polycrates, who was Bishop of Ephesus at the close of the second century, which he had also previously quoted in Bk. III, ch. 31. It occurs in a letter which he states was addressed by Polycrates to Victor, Bishop of Rome, on the subject of the controversy which had arisen between Rome and the Churches of Asia as to the proper day for keeping Easter, whether on the fourteenth day of the moon, or on the following Lord's Day. Polycrates writes: "We therefore observe the genuine day, neither adding thereto nor taking therefrom. For in Asia great lights have fallen asleep. . . . Philip, one of the twelve Apostles, who sleeps in Hierapolis, and his two aged virgin daughters. His other daughter also . . . now likewise rests in Ephesus. Moreover, John, who rested upon the bosom of our Lord, who also was a priest and bore the sacred plate, both a martyr and a teacher. He is buried in Ephesus, also Polycarp of Smyrna, both bishop and martyr. . . . All these observed the fourteenth day of the Passover according to the Gospel." Of course the mention of John as a priest, and one who bore the sacred plate, means that he was a member of the Jewish Priesthood, and wore the sacerdotal frontlet.

The significance of this statement respecting him who rested on the bosom of our Lord at the Last Supper, the beloved disciple, and the author of the Fourth Gospel, lies in the fact that it was not in the interest of Polycrates to make it. Had he been able to do so, he would have much strengthened his case against Victor and the Church of Rome by mentioning the Apostle John, one of the trio who formed the inner circle of the Apostolic band, as buried at Ephesus, and as having observed the fourteenth day of the moon as the Easter festival. But the only Apostle whom he names as supporting his position is Philip ; and, though he adds the authority of the beloved disciple, he does so only as that of a priest, a martyr and teacher. We may be sure, therefore, that Polycrates would not have used that language unless he had had good grounds for doing so ; and as Bishop of Ephesus he was in a position to know accurately the previous history of his diocese.

Is there then any reason why we should question its accuracy ? The only reason would appear to be that the company which partook of the Last Supper with our Lord was restricted to His twelve Apostles, and that, therefore, the beloved disciple must have been one of them. But is there any good ground for concluding that the company was so restricted ? No doubt it consisted mainly of the Apostles ; but if, outside their number, there was a disciple whom Jesus specially loved, what was

more natural than that, as a favour, he should have been admitted into the company? And the peculiar relation in which he stood to our Lord would account for the omission of any notice of him in the Synoptic Gospels. It is clear from many passages in the Gospels, and from Acts i. 15 and I Cor. xv. 6, that our Lord had during His life-time a number of disciples, both in Galilee and in Judæa, outside the circle of the Apostles, and we are told that not long afterwards a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith (Acts vi. 7).

In *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1922), pp. 133-148, the late Dr. C. F. Burney argued at length in favour of the view that the beloved disciple, the author of the Fourth Gospel, was not the Apostle John, but a young Judæan disciple of priestly family. And in a note (p. 144) on the subject of such a disciple being present and leaning on our Lord's breast at the Last Supper, he said: "It would not be strange if the position of privilege granted by our Lord to the young disciple should have excited the disapproval of some members, at least, of the Apostolic Twelve. Luke xxii. 21-38—a passage of extraordinary interest as appearing to offer a summary of the events of the fuller narrative contained in John xiii—states in verse 24: 'And there was a contention among them, as to which of them should be esteemed the greater.' This is met by our Lord's words of reproof, in which, 'I am among

you as he that serveth,' is the verbal summary with which the foot-washing of John xiii corresponds as the acted parable. Occasion for the Apostles' strife as to procedure may, as Dr. Plummer suggests, have arisen respecting the places at the Last Supper; but when we consider that the Twelve must presumably have sat at meals alone with their Master on many other occasions, the reason why the strife should have arisen on this occasion of all others is not apparent. Supposing, however, that this time the circle was enlarged by the admission of the young disciple, and that he was placed by our Lord next to Himself, it may be that we have found the cause of this outbreak of 'contention.' Adopting this hypothesis, we seem to read our Lord's words of reproof with a new understanding. In the injunction 'But let the greater among you become as the younger,' the young disciple, John, becomes the concrete example of the 'younger' which seems almost to acquire the meaning 'this youth' (cp. Mark ix. 33-37, and parallels). Again, the point of verse 28 appears to stand out more clearly. 'But ye Apostles [in contrast to this young disciple] are they which have continued with Me in My temptations.'"

As Dr. Burney observes, the statements by the Synoptists that our Lord sat down to the Supper with the twelve Apostles do not necessarily exclude the presence of a non-apostolic guest as well. As a slight variant on his view of the contention of the

Apostles as to precedence, it may be suggested that it arose with reference to occupying the place of honour in our Lord's bosom, and that He stopped it by placing the non-apostolic disciple there. But it may be objected, if this view is correct, how is it that the existence of this Judæan disciple is not mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels? Dr. Burney suggests an explanation of this. "Let us ask ourselves," he says, "how is it probable that our Lord would have dealt with a young man of good family and priestly connections whom we may assume to have been a mere youth (perhaps not more than sixteen), who was keenly desirous of joining Him, and becoming His disciple? Is it not likely that while reading his heart and recognising the great sincerity of his desire, He would—just because of his youth and the great renunciation of home and prospects which He knew that the step would entail—have refused with all tenderness to allow him at once to throw in his lot with the Apostolic band, and commanded him for the time to remain at home at Jerusalem? Meanwhile, whenever our Lord came up to Jerusalem and engaged in discussion with the Rabbinists, the young disciple would be there, making as much as he could of the great Teacher's temporary presence, keenly following the debates which his scholastic training so well enabled him to appreciate, drinking in every word of the subtle arguments of which the Galilean Apostles could make nothing." Our Lord, we



remember, prescribed the same course of conduct to the healed demoniac (Luke viii. 38, 39).

There is yet another argument against the Apostle John being the beloved disciple and the author of the Fourth Gospel. It tells us that after our Lord's arrest by the band under the guidance of Judas, the writer of the Gospel as well as St. Peter followed our Lord to the palace of the high priest. But the Synoptists only mention St. Peter as doing so, and give the impression that none of the other Apostles was bold enough to follow his example. The first two Gospels expressly state that they all forsook our Lord and fled, but that St. Peter turned back and followed Him afar off, and eventually entered the high priest's palace. Now if the younger son of Zebedee did so also, it is scarcely possible that the Synoptists would have been ignorant of the fact, or, knowing it, would have done him the injustice of not mentioning it. Whereas, if the other disciple, who, like St. Peter, went to the palace, was not an Apostle, but, so to speak, an outside disciple, they would have felt quite justified in the course which they took of omitting any mention of him.

We notice too that in St. Luke's record of St. Peter's visit to the tomb on the first Easter morning, no mention is made of the author of the Fourth Gospel as having gone there also (Luke xxiv. 12 ; cp. John xx. 3-10). This is intelligible if he was only a private individual, but is difficult to under-

stand if he was a fellow-apostle, the son of Zebedee.

If the view that the author of the Fourth Gospel was a Judæan disciple of priestly family is correct, what a flood of light it throws on the contents of the Gospel! It of course thoroughly explains the fact that he was an acquaintance of the high priest, and knew the name, or nickname, of the high priest's slave whose ear St. Peter cut, and the kinship of that slave with another member of the high priest's household, and was able to obtain admission for both himself and for St. Peter into the high priest's palace. But if this view is correct, the fact greatly increases the possibility, and even the probability, that he was actually present at our Lord's interview with Nicodemus, and at our Lord's controversies with the Jews in Jerusalem which are recorded in subsequent chapters of the Gospel. Although the historical credibility of the Gospel does not absolutely depend upon the correctness of this view, yet, if it is correct, it adds enormous weight to that credibility.

But whether the author of the Gospel was a young Judæan priest, or was the Apostle John, it was certainly written by one who was a contemporary of the scenes which it narrates, and who, unless he is romancing, was himself present at some of them. On these grounds, unless good reasons can be shown to the contrary, he is entitled to claim our acceptance of what he professes to relate as a substantially accurate record of those scenes.



## CHAPTER III

### STRUCTURE AND DATE OF THE GOSPEL

THE Fourth Gospel, as distinguished from the Synoptic Gospels, presents many literary peculiarities and problems which cannot all be explained or solved with anything approaching to certainty. It opens with a theological prologue; the narrative is in many places interspersed with comments, some of which it is difficult exactly to disentangle from the speeches or incidents upon which they are made; and at its close remarks are added by an unknown independent editor. To him must undoubtedly be ascribed the last two verses of the Gospel, and probably also the last verse of ch. xx; and it is possible that some of the interspersed comments were likewise written by him. Moreover, the contents appear to have suffered considerable dislocation before they were made up into the Gospel as we now have it. Then again, it is contended that having been written at the late date to which it is generally assigned, it cannot contain an accurate historical account of the facts and discourses which it professes to record. All these points have an important bearing on the question of the historicity of the Gospel.

## I. INTERPOLATIONS

In this inquiry our Revised Version will be regarded as correct in omitting from the narrative of the healing of the impotent man, in ch. v. 1-9, the statements as to the angel coming down at certain seasons into the pool and troubling the water, and as to the healing of the diseased man who then first stepped into the pool.

The incident of the woman taken in adultery (ch. vii. 53, viii. 1-11), which in the Revised Version is enclosed in brackets, may also be regarded as not actually part of the Fourth Gospel. The oldest extant MS. in which it is found is Codex Bezae (D) now in the Cambridge University Library. The narrative contained in the passage is probably authentic. It could hardly have been invented. But its literary style and language, instead of being Johannine, is akin to that of the Synoptic Gospels. In three MSS., which may have been copied from a very early original, it is found at the end of Luke xxi, the concluding words of which, in the Gospel as we have it, are almost identical with those in vers. 1, 2, of the passage in question. It would fit in very well there, and that was, perhaps, its original position. Possibly it found place in St. John's Gospel through having been inserted in some early copy as a marginal comment on the words "I judge no man" (ch. viii. 15).

It may be a question whether the last chapter of

the Gospel was actually added to it by the Evangelist himself. The book certainly appears to have been intended to come to a close at the end of ch. xx, but he may have appended ch. xxi as an afterthought or supplement. It is a little difficult to believe that the author of the Gospel himself inserted our Lord's remark about his future, and the rumour which arose out of it among the "brethren," together with the comment on the remark and on the rumour. Moreover, the words attributed to our Lord, "If I will that he tarry till I come" (ver. 22), and the rumour to which they gave rise, are more consonant with the idea of our Lord's speedy personal coming, which we find in the other Gospels, than with His words recorded in the Fourth Gospel, "I will not leave you desolate, I will come to you" (ch. xiv. 18), referring to His coming in the shape of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. On the other hand, there is no reason to doubt that we owe the main substance of the chapter to the Evangelist, though perhaps the chapter itself was added to the Gospel not by him but by the editor, who certainly wrote the last two verses, and who in that case had obtained from him the rest of the chapter, either directly, or indirectly, apart from the bulk of the Gospel. The general historicity, however, of the rest of the Gospel does not depend upon the absolute historic accuracy of this chapter.

## 2. INTERSPERSED COMMENTS

To the category of interspersed comments belongs, of course, the initial prologue. There is no difficulty in ascertaining its limits; though perhaps ver. 15 has been intruded into it by mistake. But the next comment, the first of the two in ch. iii, is not so easy to deal with. It ends with ver. 21, but where does it begin? Our Communion Service ascribes the words in ver. 16 to our Lord Himself; but upon the whole, it appears more likely that the Evangelist intended to close His conversation with Nicodemus at the end of ver. 15, or perhaps at the end of ver. 13, and that all that follows to the end of ver. 21 is a comment upon it.

The second comment in the same chapter presents no similar difficulty. It begins with ver. 31 and is continued to the end of the chapter. It arises out of the comparison which John the Baptist is recorded as having drawn between Christ and himself.

The existence of these comments adds to the probability that we have also a comment of the Evangelist in ch. xvii. 3, "And this is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

Again, in ch. xi. 51, 52, St. John introduces a comment of his own on the utterance of Caiaphas in the Sanhedrin. And besides these, we find other comments intended to explain the narrative, and more or less closely connected with it, the longest of which occurs in ch. xii. 37-41.

## 3. DISLOCATIONS

The comments cannot be said to affect in any way the question of the historicity of the Gospel. But it is otherwise with the dislocations. If these can be readjusted, it will materially help the claim of the Gospel to be a consistent historical narrative. They are fully discussed in *Disarrangements in the Fourth Gospel*, by F. Warburton Lewis (Cambridge University Press, 1910).

We have already noticed the probable slight dislocation in the Prologue, where ver. 15 ought apparently to follow ver. 18. It has been suggested that the contents of ch. iii. 22-30, with the comment on them in vers. 31-36, should properly be inserted after ch. ii. 12, which would make our Lord's baptizing ministry precede instead of follow His visit to Jerusalem at the Passover. This, with its notice of a controversy about baptism and purifying, would add significance to His conversation with Nicodemus about birth by water and the Spirit; but the arguments for it cannot be said to be conclusive. It is otherwise, however, with the next case of dislocation.

Chs. v and vi ought clearly to be transposed. Ch. vi opens with the statement that our Lord went away to the other side of the Sea of Tiberias. From whence? Not from Jerusalem, where the close of ch. v leaves Him, but from Galilee, on its western shore, whither at the close of ch. iv He is

stated to have come from Judæa. In ch. vi. 4 we read that the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was at hand, and ch. v opens with the statement, "After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." In the margin of the Revised Version it is said, "Many ancient authorities read *the* feast," and this is probably the true reading. The indefinite mention of *a* feast is quite contrary to the Evangelist's practice of giving precise details. Of course, with ch. v preceding ch. vi "*the* feast" is unintelligible; but with the true order of ch. vi preceding ch. v it means *the* feast referred to in ch. vi. 4, to which our Lord went up shortly after the feeding of the five thousand, and at which the events occurred which are narrated in ch. v. Then follows naturally the opening sentence of ch. vii: "After these things [the occurrences at the Passover] Jesus walked in Galilee, for He would not walk in Judæa, because the Jews sought to kill Him" (as mentioned in ch. v. 16, 18).

Connected with this serious dislocation there are other displacements of minor importance, the readjustment of which, however, adds clearness and consistency to the Gospel narrative. The contents of ch. vii. 15-24, and ch. viii. 12-20, suggest that these two passages should be transferred to the end of ch. v. The marvel of the Jews, and their question "How knoweth this man letters? (γράμματα)" (vii. 15), have no particular point where they now stand, but come most appositely



after ch. v. 47, where our Lord refers to Moses, and says, "If ye believe not his writings (γράμματα) how shall ye believe My words?" The allusions to Moses in ch. vii. 19, 22, 23, naturally follow after the reference to him at the end of ch. v. The mention in ch. vii. 23 of the healing of the man on the Sabbath Day is entirely appropriate if it formed part of the discussion on the subject recorded in ch. v, but it seems forced and out of place during a much later visit to Jerusalem when many intervening events had taken place. Again, our Lord's assertion, and the denial of His hearers, that there was a plot to kill Him (ch. vii. 19, 20), are quite consistent with the contents of ch. v; but their insertion in ch. vii renders the question in ver. 25 of that chapter somewhat unmeaning. On the other hand, if verses 15-24 are eliminated from ch. vii we can see that ver. 25 and the subsequent verses follow very naturally and appropriately on ver. 14.

Then, as regards ch. viii. 12-20, if we omit the opening words, "Then spake Jesus again unto them," the whole passage forms a fitting completion of the discussion recorded in ch. v and ch. vii. 15-24. It continues the topics of (a) the testimony of the Father, which is dwelt upon in ch. v. 31-37, and, (b) our Lord's claim to judge, which is introduced in ch. v. 22, 27, 30, as contrasted with the judgment of His opponents, to which allusion is made in ch. vii. 24 and ch. viii. 15. And the opening words, "I am the light of the world," are in contrast to what



our Lord had said of the Baptist in ch. v. 35, "He was the lamp that burneth and shineth, and ye were willing to rejoice for a season in his light." The difficulty caused by the opening words of ch. viii. 12 will disappear if we recognise that when once the dislocation of vers. 12-20 had taken place, it was necessary to insert these words in order to connect the narrative with ch. vii. 52, which they then immediately followed, assuming the intervening verses to have been a late interpolation. It will be seen that the discussion recorded in ch. viii. 21-59 proceeds upon quite different lines from that which is recorded in the verses immediately preceding, but follows very naturally upon that which is narrated in ch. vii. 25-52.

There is also an apparent disarrangement in ch. x which, however, does not materially affect the historicity of the narrative. But as that chapter now stands, the parable or simile of the sheepfold follows somewhat abruptly upon the close of the preceding chapter, which is concerned with the subject of spiritual blindness, arising out of our Lord's having given sight to the man born blind. Then in vers. 19-21 a division among the Jews is recorded, arising again out of that miracle, and having nothing to do with the parable of the sheep. But verse 22 introduces a new scene, at the opening of which the Jews categorically demand of our Lord whether or not He is the Christ. He replies that He has already told them, but they believe not, "be-

cause," He adds, "ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you" (ver. 26). There is nothing in vers. 1-18 about the Jews not being of His sheep, and the words appear to refer to some unrecorded discussion. But having thus mentioned "sheep," our Lord continues the idea in vers. 27-29; and if vers. 1-18 are transferred to follow these verses, they quite naturally still further develop and amplify the same idea. Vers. 19-21 fit in very well at the end of the preceding chapter, and ver. 30 will follow ver. 18 quite as appropriately as in our Gospel it at present follows ver. 29. It would seem, therefore, that ch. x ought to be rearranged thus: vers. 19-29, 1-18, 30-42.

The last instance of these apparent dislocations occurs in our Lord's final discourse to His disciples before His betrayal. There are strong grounds for inserting chs. xv and xvi between the words "Jesus saith" in ch. xiii. 31 and the passage which begins with the rest of that verse, and runs on to the end of ch. xiv. The only really material bearing which this rearrangement has upon the historical value of the Gospel is that it places our Lord's prediction of the scattering of the disciples (ch. xvi. 31) before His prediction of St. Peter's denials (ch. xiii. 38), which appears to be the more natural order. But it also places our Lord's remark, "None of you asketh Me, Whither goest Thou?" (ch. xvi. 5), before, instead of after St. Peter's question, "Lord, whither goest Thou?" (ch. xiii. 36). And it detaches the words

“Now is the Son of Man glorified,” etc., from the exit of Judas, and connects with that exit vers. 2, 3 of ch. xv, which seem to be an appropriate comment upon it. It further makes the words recorded in ch. xiv. 27-31 the conclusion of the discourse, to which they form a natural ending. And the command to the disciples to stand with a view to departure (xiv. 31), is naturally followed by our Lord’s prayer recorded in ch. xvii which was in that case offered as they stood, and at the conclusion of which they went forth as mentioned in ch. xviii. 1.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. LINGUISTIC PECULIARITIES

There are many peculiar features in the diction of the Gospel which clearly show that the native language of the author was Aramaic, and that he thought in that language. But Dr. C. F. Burney, in *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel*, goes further, and maintains that the Gospel was originally written in Aramaic, probably at Antioch, soon after the destruction of Jerusalem, and was translated into Greek when the author afterwards migrated to Ephesus. The German scholar, L. Bertholdt, had before suggested that the discourses of our Lord, which are reported in the Gospel, were written down in Aramaic by St. John, soon after they were spoken, and were afterwards incorporated into his Gospel. And Dr. Burney supports his theory,

<sup>1</sup> As to dislocations in our Lord’s last discourse see further, Appendix.

by pointing out words and passages which can be best explained upon the hypothesis that they are translations from an Aramaic original.

In ch. ii. 22, according to the Greek, we should read, "When therefore He was risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He was saying (ἔλεγεν) this unto them," which, of course, does not make sense. If, however, the Greek was translated from the Aramaic, the tense can be at once accounted for.

The words "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (ch. vii. 38) are extremely difficult to explain, as they stand in the Greek of which our English versions give a faithful rendering. But in a translation from the Aramaic the word for "fountain" might easily have been mistaken for the word for "belly"; and according to Dr. Burney, the mistake caused a wrong connection of the parts of the sentence recorded in vers. 37, 38, which ought to run: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me; and let him drink that believeth in Me. As the Scripture hath said, Rivers shall flow forth from the fountain of living waters" (see Joel iii. 18, a passage which in a Jewish Midrash is applied to the times of the Messiah).

Again, in ch. viii. 56, the Greek of the Gospel is correctly translated, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad," though *ἵνα* in the sense of "*that* he saw My day" is an extreme instance of the strange use of that con-

junction in the Fourth Gospel. But Dr. Burney suggests that in the original Aramaic the first verb was a word which meant either "exulted" or "longed," and if in the passage we substitute "longed to see," for "rejoiced to see," we get a better sense and a less strained meaning for *iva*.

Apart from these particular sentences, Dr. Burney points out that the strange use of the conjunctions *iva* and *ὅτι* in the Gospel indicates that the Greek, as we have it, was translated from an Aramaic original.

The frequent use of *iva* is in itself remarkable. In classical Greek it always means "in order that." In later Greek, however, its meaning became extended, and tended somewhat to correspond with our English "that." But except to a certain extent in St. Mark's Gospel, in which there are other traces of Aramaic influence, we find nothing elsewhere in the New Testament approaching to the frequent and miscellaneous use of it in the Fourth Gospel. We have already noticed one instance of this use of *iva* in ch. viii. 56. Another instance is in ch. i. 27, "whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy *that* I should unloose." In ch. ix. 22 we find it after "the Jews had already agreed," and are of course obliged to render it in English by the simple word "that," as we must also do in the three cases in which it follows "it is expedient" (ch. xi. 50, xvi. 7, xviii. 14).

And we can hardly avoid the conclusion that *iva*



is also sometimes used to represent the relatives "who" or "which" or "when."

In ch. i. 8, in order to keep its sense of "that," we are obliged to insert the word "came" (R.V.); but if we understand the sentence as meaning "was one who bore witness of the light," the insertion is unnecessary. Again, in ch. v. 7, the Greek runs, "I have no man *that* he should put me into the pool," but the meaning is, "I have no man *who* will put me into the pool." In ch. ix. 36 the question which we translate, "Who is he, Lord, *that* I may believe on him?" is really, "Who is he, Lord, on *whom* I should believe?" And in ch. xiv. 16, instead of "He shall give you another Comforter *that* He may abide with you for ever," the meaning is simply "*who* shall abide with you for ever."

In chs. xii. 23, xiii. 1, xvi. 2, 32, *iva* is used after "the hour had come," or "was coming," to denote *when*. Our translation of it as "that" makes fairly good sense, but to give it that meaning is an unnatural strain on the Greek word.

All these various difficulties, however, disappear if *iva* was a translation of a word in the original Aramaic of the Gospel which meant either "that," or "who" or "which" or "when," according as the context required.

We find in the Fourth Gospel a similar strained use of *οτι* which can be explained in like manner. In ch. ix. 17 the question, "What sayest thou of

him *that* he hath opened thine eyes ? ” gives a very awkward sense. “ What sayest thou of him *who* hath opened thine eyes ? ” is palpably better, and corresponds better with the reply. In ch. viii. 45, “ I *who* speak the truth [in contrast to the devil, who is a liar, ver. 44] ye believe not,” makes better sense than “ Ye believe Me not *because* I speak the truth.” And in ch. ix. 8 the sense requires “ they which before had seen him *when* he was blind,” instead of “ *that* he was blind.”

These are the most striking of the many Aramaisms which Dr. Burney points out in the Gospel. They afford strong evidence that its contents, or some of them, were originally committed to writing in Aramaic. And if so, there can be no doubt that they were, either as a complete Gospel, or more probably in fragments, first written many years before the close of the first century, and before the author went to reside at Ephesus ; since he would certainly not have used that language there.

In any case, from the way in which the author explains Jewish notions and customs, it is clear that he compiled the Gospel for Gentile Christians who were not familiar with them. It would not have been necessary to tell Jewish Christians that Jews have no dealings with Samaritans (ch. iv. 9), or that the Feast of Tabernacles was a Jewish festival (ch. vii. 2), or that the feast of the dedication took place in the winter (ch. x. 22).



## 5. DATE OF THE GOSPEL

Whether or not the contents of the Gospel or any of them previously existed in writing in Aramaic or in Greek, it is generally agreed that the Gospel, as we have it in Greek, was first put forth at Ephesus, at the end of the first, or beginning of the second century. It has been commonly assumed that its contents were first committed to writing at that time, and that we accordingly have in them only the reminiscences of an old man respecting events which occurred, and discourses which were uttered, some seventy years previously—reminiscences distorted by lapse of time, and imperfect memory, and coloured by the thoughts and beliefs which in the meantime had grown up and become crystallised respecting those events and discourses. But apart from the theory of its earlier Aramaic form, it is quite possible, if not probable, that the Greek Gospel, which first saw the light at Ephesus as a complete book after that long interval of time, was compiled from notes or accounts which the author had committed to writing for his own use many years before, and even perhaps at, or shortly after, the time of the occurrences and discourses which he professes to narrate.

It is generally admitted that the first and third Gospels embody sayings of our Lord recorded in a document now lost, which scholars have designated "Q," from the German *Quelle* (source), and which

they suppose to have been written soon after or perhaps even before the close of our Lord's earthly life. There is no reason why St. John may not, at or about the same time, have written reminiscences which he afterwards incorporated into his Gospel. A Rabbinic student would have been almost sure to have at once made notes of what he heard from a great Teacher.

As regards our Lord's discourse to His disciples, narrated at length in chs. xiv, xv, xvi, and followed by His prayer in ch. xvii, Canon A. C. Deane has ingeniously suggested that the Evangelist may have employed some of the desolate hours of the first Easter Even in narrating them to our Lord's disconsolate mother, and so have fixed the substance of them indelibly on his memory, even if he did not at once make a written record of them. And the dislocations in the Gospel, which have been noticed, seem to prove that its contents were not written straight off from beginning to end, *currente calamo*, but in fragments on separate sheets of whatever material was used for the purpose, which were afterwards pieced together not very satisfactorily, and probably not by the Evangelist himself. These fragments may have been written at different times, and long before they were formed into the Gospel. No valid argument, therefore, against the historicity of its contents can be founded on the late date when this formation took place.

## CHAPTER IV

### OBJECT OF THE GOSPEL

THERE can be no doubt that the Gospel was designed to give a substantially accurate account of those sayings and doings of our Lord, and events in His life, which it professes to record. In the Prologue (ch. i. 14) the author declares that "We beheld His glory." At the end of ch. xx it is said, "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in His name" (ch. xx. 30, 31). It is not clear whether this is the statement of the Evangelist himself, or, which perhaps is rather more probable, of the contemporary editor of the Gospel; but in either case it is conclusive testimony that the Gospel was intended to be true history, and was so accepted at the time when it was put forth. This is again emphasised in the last verse but one of ch. xxi, where the editor says, "This is the disciple which beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his witness is true."

It has never been seriously doubted that the First

Epistle General of John was written by the same person as the Fourth Gospel, and that Epistle opens with the words, "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled concerning the Word of Life (and the life was manifested and we have seen and bear witness and declare unto you the life, the eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us), that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also." Now there is no actual declaration in the Epistle of what the writer had seen and heard in connection with our Lord's earthly life; but if we suppose, as we are quite entitled to do, that the Fourth Gospel and this Epistle were intended to be put forth simultaneously, these opening words of the Epistle are really an introduction to the contents of the Gospel.

Universal tradition is to the same effect. It is summarised by Eusebius in Bk. III, ch. 24, of his *Ecclesiastical History*, where he says: "Matthew also having first proclaimed the Gospel in Hebrew, when on the point of going also to other nations, committed it to writing in his native tongue, and thus supplied the want of his presence to them, by his writings. But after Mark and Luke had already published their Gospels, they say that John, who during all this time was proclaiming the Gospel without writing, at length proceeded to write it on the following occasion. The three Gospels

previously written having been distributed among all, and also handed to him; they say that he admitted them, giving his testimony to their truth; but that there was only wanting in the narrative the account of the things done by Christ among the first of His deeds and at the commencement of the Gospel. And this was the truth. For it was evident that the other three Evangelists only wrote the deeds of our Lord for one year after the imprisonment of John the Baptist, and intimated this in the very beginning of their history. For, after the fasting of forty days, and the consequent temptation, Matthew indeed specifies the time of his history in these words: ‘But hearing that John was delivered up, he returned from Judæa into Galilee.’ Mark, in the same manner, writes, ‘But after John was delivered up Jesus came into Galilee.’ And Luke, before he commenced the deeds of Jesus, in much the same way, designates the time, saying, ‘Herod thus added yet this wickedness above all he had committed, that he shut up John in prison.’ For these reasons the Apostle John, it is said, being entreated to undertake it, wrote the account of the time not recorded by the former Evangelists, and the deeds done by our Saviour, which they have passed by (for these were the events that occurred before the imprisonment of John), and this very fact is intimated by him, when he says, ‘This beginning of miracles Jesus made,’ and then proceeds to make mention



of the Baptist, in the midst of our Lord's deeds, as John was at that time baptizing at Ænon near Salim. He plainly also shows this in the words, 'John was not yet cast into prison.' The Apostle, therefore, in his Gospel, gives the deeds of Jesus before the Baptist was cast into prison, but the other three Evangelists mention the circumstances after that event. One who attends to these circumstances can no longer entertain the opinion that the Gospels are at variance with each other ; as the Gospel of John comprehends the first events of Christ, but the others, the history that took place at the latter part of the time. It is probable, therefore, that for these reasons John has passed by in silence the genealogy of our Lord, because it was written by Matthew and Luke, but that he commenced with the doctrine of the Trinity, as a part reserved for him by the divine Spirit, as if for a superior. Let this suffice to be said, respecting the Gospel of John."

This passage is, of course, incorrect so far as it implies that the narrative in the Fourth Gospel is confined to events which took place before the imprisonment of the Baptist, the date of the commencement of our Lord's Galilean ministry, recorded by the Synoptists. The whole of the Gospel after the first four chapters treats of His sayings and doings subsequent to that occurrence. But with the exception of the mention of the Feeding of the Five Thousand, and the subsequent

crossing of the lake, it contains no allusion to anything narrated by the Synoptists, and in like manner the events which it records are unnoticed by them, until we come to the last week of our Lord's earthly life. How are we to account for this? It may certainly be explained in the way in which Eusebius explains it. The author, and those for whom he writes, are assumed to have been well acquainted with the Synoptic Gospels, or at any rate with the main facts which they relate; and it is supposed that he desired to give them further information on sayings and doings of our Lord of which they were ignorant.

There can be no doubt of the truth of the assumption on which this explanation is based. The Fourth Gospel was intended to be read by those who knew the general story of our Lord's life as recorded by the Synoptists and would, therefore, not require explanation of persons or facts with which that story had rendered them familiar. At the commencement of the narrative the abrupt mention of John, without giving the special title ("the Baptist") by which he was distinguished from other contemporary individuals of the same name, presupposes that the readers of the Gospel would be acquainted with the general facts of his baptismal ministry in the wilderness. Again, we notice that at the close of the controversy about the Bread of Life, the author writes, "Jesus therefore said to the Twelve, Will ye also go away?"



Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to Whom shall we go ? ” (ch. vi. 67, 68) without having previously given the slightest hint as to who the Twelve were. He here takes for granted that his readers already knew that our Lord had twelve chosen Apostles, and that Peter was one of them. The “ Twelve ” are again mentioned in verses 70, 71, and in ch. xx. 24, without any explanation ; and a person who only knew of our Lord’s life from the Fourth Gospel, would not have the faintest idea what that number stood for, or who were referred to by it, except that Peter and Thomas and Judas Iscariot were three of them. Similarly, in ch. xviii. 29, Pilate is introduced without any statement as to who he was.

We may therefore believe that one object, at any rate, of the Evangelist in writing the Gospel was to give supplementary information about our Lord’s doings and sayings to those who had already acquired some knowledge of them from other sources, either from one or more of the Synoptic Gospels, or from treatises or teachers supplying more or less the same details as are contained in those Gospels.

But this object will not completely account for the special contents of the Gospel, and other concurrent reasons may be assigned for them.

The Prologue shows that the Gospel was written with a distinct theological object ; and the circumstances which gave rise to it have been strikingly

suggested by Canon J. M. Wilson : " The crisis in the Church that called forth this latest Gospel, so unlike the three recognised Gospels, seems to have been this. Everyone will remember that in the first three Gospels, and still more markedly in the early Epistles of St. Paul, the belief is manifest that Christ would soon visibly return to earth in the clouds of heaven. For this event the Church waited for a generation in devout expectation. During that time it was being gradually borne in upon the faithful that this expectation was a mistake. The end was not to be as they had imagined ; not as they thought that Christ Himself had said it should be. This must have sorely perplexed many faithful souls. It must have been doubted by not a few, whether the belief in Christ as their divine Lord could survive such a disillusion. Could Christianity, with its faith and its hope of an early coming of Christ, be transformed ? Could the faith be lifted to a higher plane, and shown to be independent of the transient and precarious events of time ? Could Christ be shown to be part of the eternal and divine plan for the redemption and uplifting of humanity in long ages to come ? This was the question which pressed on St. Paul in his later years, and afterwards on St. John. Few greater crises of faith can be imagined. Judaism was still strong, and a foe to Christianity. New philosophical religions were attracting men. Stoicism was a great power with the nobler minds.

And, on the other hand, was not Christianity permanently discredited by Christ's failure to come again to rule and reign as He was thought to have promised ?

“ Who was Christ ? The real question then, as now, and always, was, ‘ What think ye of Christ ? ’ Had St. John, the one surviving Apostle, nothing to reply ? Had he no last words to say before he died, of that Jesus Christ whom he had seen and known and loved as his very soul ? What were the real relations between Christ and Man, and Christ and God, questions which the earlier Evangelists had barely touched ? It was this demand that compelled St. John to record what Christ was to him. He meets the question, ‘ Who was Christ ? ’ by the identification of Jesus with ‘ The Word that was in the beginning with God,’ the ever-present Light of the World. It is this identification which, as everyone knows, stands as the portal to his Gospel. This is St. John's great contribution to the philosophy and history of religion.” (*The Origins and Aims of the Four Gospels*, by J. M. Wilson, D.D., Canon of Worcester. Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1910, pp. 110–112.)

If we accept the theory that the Evangelist was a Judæan disciple of priestly family, we may discover another object of his writing the Gospel, in a desire to give to the Church, before he died, an account of scenes in our Lord's life in Jerusalem and Judæa, of which he had been an eye-witness.

His not having done so sooner may be accounted for by a modest reluctance to push himself into the foreground, due to the fact, that though he was our Lord's specially beloved disciple, he had no leading official position in the Church, and did not wish to attempt to put himself on a level with those who held such a position. He had treasured up reminiscences of these scenes for his own private use, but would not, apparently, have made them public unless he had been specifically asked for them, or there had been a special reason for his doing so, at a time when all the other contemporaries of our Lord had passed away.

## CHAPTER V

### DISTINCTIVE CONTENTS OF THE GOSPEL

WE come now to consider the contents of the Gospel in their historical aspect; and before discussing them in detail, it will be well to take a general survey of them.

#### SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The Gospel opens with a Prologue in which allusion is made to John the Baptist as the precursor of our Lord, and proceeds to narrate his testimony respecting our Lord, as given to an embassy from Jerusalem and then to his own disciples, which had the effect of attaching to our Lord His first followers. With these, our Lord proceeds to Galilee, and attends a marriage in Cana, where He performs His first sign or miracle.

The Evangelist then mentions our Lord's visit to Jerusalem at a Passover, during which, according to the narrative, He cleansed the Temple, and His ministry of baptism in Judæa. At this time the first of the theological discussions recorded in the Gospel took place, during a nocturnal interview of our Lord with Nicodemus. His journey into

Galilee is then mentioned, including a conversation with a Samaritan woman, and a stay of two days in a Samaritan town on the way.

On His arrival in Galilee His healing of the son of a member of the royal family or household of Herod (*βασιλικός*) is recorded as the second sign or miracle which He wrought in Galilee. The Evangelist narrates five others, if we include that mentioned in ch. xxi, namely, (*a*) the feeding of the five thousand ; (*b*) the healing of the impotent man ; (*c*) the giving of sight to the man born blind ; (*d*) the raising of Lazarus ; and, (*e*) the draught of great fish.

But it is remarkable that St. John seems to record these, not so much for their own sake, or in order to illustrate our Lord's glory and power, as for their consequences. The first three give rise to prolonged discussions and controversies, the substance of which he incorporates into his narrative, and the last is followed by the special commission to St. Peter, and the prediction of his martyrdom. Even the miracle of the raising of Lazarus, which we should consider the greatest of all, is narrated without any comment on the majesty of Him who wrought it ; but its effects in finally deciding His enemies to put Him to death, and in causing the people to give Him a triumphant entry into Jerusalem, are carefully noted.

This apparent insistence less upon the signs or miracles which are recorded than upon the dis-



courses or events which followed them, raises a doubt whether it was not the editor of the Gospel, rather than the author of it, who wrote the last two verses of ch. xx, in which it is said, that the signs written in it are written that the reader of it might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. The Gospel itself gives the impression that the Evangelist intended to induce or fortify that belief, quite as much, if not more, by our Lord's sayings, and the other matter which we find in it, as by the actual signs or miracles which he recorded.

With our Lord's return to Bethany six days before the last Passover, the Fourth Gospel enters upon ground covered by the Synoptic narratives, which had only been the case twice before, namely, in connection with the Baptist's mission and the feeding of the five thousand. But with the exception of the supper at Bethany, and the entry into Jerusalem, it records nothing contained in those narratives until the night of our Lord's betrayal and arrest. Thenceforward it supplements them, though differing from them in some not unimportant particulars.

We must now proceed to consider the contents of the Gospel in detail.

## I. THE PROLOGUE

### Ch. i. 1-18

The Prologue furnishes the key to the whole work. St. John begins by declaring that the Word,

the Logos, was God from Eternity, and was life and light, and "this Word" he adds "was made flesh, and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (ch. i. 14). All that follows is intended to illustrate this; and the historical value of the Gospel depends, to a certain extent, on the date at which the Evangelist formed this conception of our Lord. Many critics have maintained that its source is to be found in the writings of the Alexandrine Jew, Philo, who developed a philosophic idea of the Logos, as an eternal attribute or essential part of the Deity; that St. John became acquainted with this idea late in life, when he was in Ephesus, and that, throughout his Gospel, he was actuated by an endeavour to show that this idea was incarnated in the human person of our Lord. If this is correct, it necessarily throws suspicion upon the historicity of his narrative, since in that case he must almost certainly have been biassed in his account of our Lord's sayings and actions by his desire to show that they fitted in with and proved his newly-adopted theory. But Bishop Westcott and others have conclusively shown that this was not the case.

Whatever similarity there may be between St. John's Logos-doctrine, and that of Philo, it is clear that the Evangelist derived his notion from the teaching of the Old Testament respecting the Word of God, as expounded by the Palestinian Rabbis,

which, to his mind, was in accord with his personal experience of our Lord's life on earth. In the Old Testament itself, the Word of God is almost personified in such passages as, "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made" (Ps. xxxiii. 6) and "He sendeth His Word and healeth them" (Ps. cvii. 20). But the Targums, the Rabbinic paraphrases of the Old Testament, repeatedly substituted the *Memra* (Word) of God, for God Himself, where the Old Testament represented Him in a character which to the Jewish thought of later times appeared to be too anthropomorphic. Dr. Burney, in *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel*, quotes a few instances of this from the early chapters of Genesis. "They heard the voice of the *Memra* of the Lord God walking in the garden" (iii. 8). "I heard the voice of Thy *Memra*" (Ib. 10). "The Lord repented in His *Memra* because He had made man" (vi. 6). "The Lord said in His *Memra*, I will not again curse the ground" (viii. 21). "This is the token of the covenant which I make between My *Memra* and you" (ix. 12).

Dr. Burney points out that the Prologue contains two other expressions which suggest a Rabbinic origin. "The Word was made flesh," is, of course, a purely Christian idea; but when the Evangelist adds, "and tabernacled (ἐσκήνωσεν) among us," he appears to refer to the Jewish doctrine of the *Sh'kina*, or visible dwelling of Jehovah among His people. In the following passages, the Targums

have, "That I may cause My *Sh'kina* to dwell among you" (Exod. xxv. 8). "And I will cause My *Sh'kina* to dwell in the midst of the children of Israel" (Exod. xxix. 45).

Again, when St. John adds "We beheld His glory," there seems to be a distinct reference to Old Testament passages and Targums which connect the "glory" of God with His manifestations to men. This is corroborated by the reference to Is. vi. in ch. xii. 38-41. The Evangelist there declares: "These things said Isaiah when he saw His glory" (i.e. the glory of Christ) "and spake of Him"; and the Targum version of Is. vi. 5 is, "Mine eye hath seen the *Y'HARA* (glory) of the *SH'KINA* of the King of the ages." In the Old Testament itself we find "The glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud" (Exod. xvi. 10) and, "The glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai and the cloud covered it six days" (Ib. xxiv. 16). But in the Targums the expression "the glory (*Y'HARA*) of the Lord" is used in many places as a paraphrase, where the original Scripture intimates the appearance of God Himself. Thus, they give in Exod. iii. 6, "Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon the manifestation of the *Y'HARA* of the Lord," and in Exod. xxiv. 10, "they saw the *Y'HARA* of the God of Israel."

The Prologue, then, so far from throwing any suspicion on the historicity of the subsequent narratives, affords an additional reason for accepting

it, especially with respect to our Lord's discussions with His opponents ; since it shows that the Evangelist was steeped in Rabbinic lore, and therefore well qualified to appreciate those discussions and to report them with substantial accuracy.

## 2. THE TESTIMONY OF THE BAPTIST

### Ch. i. 19-36

The statements mentioned in the Fourth Gospel as having been made by the Baptist to the embassy from Jerusalem, respecting himself and our Lord (ch. i. 20-27), are in accordance with what the Synoptic Gospels represent him to have said, and there is no reason to doubt their historical accuracy. But it is otherwise with his subsequent remarks about our Lord which are peculiar to the Fourth Gospel, and which it represents as having been made on two successive days when he saw our Lord, and said, " Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away (or beareth) the sin of the world " : " Behold the Lamb of God " (ch. i. 29, 36). Some commentators have thought it inconceivable that the Baptist could have uttered these words at the commencement of our Lord's ministry, and regard them as an expression of what our Lord was realised to be after His Passion and Resurrection, and as put by the Evangelist into the mouth of the Baptist, without his having had any historical ground for doing so. That they should have been spoken by



the Baptist at that time is, no doubt, on first thoughts, startling; but a satisfactory explanation of them can be suggested.

The words clearly refer to the portrait of the servant of Jehovah in the 53rd chapter of the book of Isaiah, and the Baptist was no doubt well acquainted with the contents of that book. The Synoptic Gospels refer one of the prophecies in it to him (Matt. iii. 3; Mark i. 3; Luke iii. 4-6). There is nothing, therefore, surprising in his referring another of its prophecies to our Lord. But it is objected that the idea of a suffering Messiah was not in our Lord's time entertained or tolerated. It certainly did not then form part of the current religious thought of the Jews; and to the Apostles it was inconceivable until it was actually realised by the Crucifixion. But, besides the detailed prophecy of the Suffering Servant in the book of Isaiah, the book of Daniel had made mention of an Anointed One being cut off (ch. ix. 26); and the idea was certainly present to the mind of the aged Simeon, according to St. Luke's report of what he said when our Lord was presented in the Temple (Luke ii. 34, 35). It is easy to see what led the Baptist to utter the words in question. He would not have uttered them at our Lord's Baptism; there was nothing in the appearance of our Lord on that occasion to suggest to him the idea contained in them. But now it was different. Our Lord had just passed through a long period of fasting and



temptation. He must have shown unmistakable traces of it in His countenance and aspect. The Baptist, in observing these, would have been reminded of the prophet's description of the Suffering Servant in Isa. liii, as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, as one who is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and we can understand how, with this idea in his mind, he came to utter the words in question.

Dr. Burney points out that the Hebrew word for "lamb" had come in its Aramaic form to mean "a young man" or "a servant," and this linguistic fact establishes a still closer connection between the Baptist's utterances and Isa. liii.

These utterances, too, based upon our Lord's emaciated appearance after His fast and temptation in the wilderness, correspond historically with that incident; for the mention of which we have to refer to the Synoptic Gospels.

But in designating our Lord as the Lamb of God, the Baptist may possibly also have had in his mind the passage in the book of Enoch, in which the anticipated Messiah is alluded to as a lamb: "I saw till all their generations were transformed and they became white bulls, and the first among them became a lamb, and that lamb became a great animal . . . and the Lord of the sheep rejoiced over it and over all the oxen" (ch. xc).

## 3. THE FIRST DISCIPLES

## Ch. i. 37-51

The Fourth Gospel represents the Baptist not only as generally preparing the way for our Lord, but also as furnishing Him with His first two followers. One of these is mentioned as being Andrew, who was afterwards one of the Apostles, and it is reasonable to conclude that the other was the Evangelist himself. The precision with which the adhesion to our Lord of these first disciples is recorded, including an exact statement of days and even of an hour, indicates that we have it from the pen of one who was present. The addition of three others is narrated ; two of whom, Peter and Philip, certainly afterwards became Apostles, as did also probably the third, who in this Gospel is called Nathanael. The mention of Nathanael which we find in its first and last chapters, is peculiar to the Fourth Gospel, but is made without any statement as to who he was, evidently upon the assumption that he would be as well known to those for whom the Gospel was written as were the Apostles Peter, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, the sons of Zebedee, and the two Judases, who are in like manner named in the narrative, without any introductory description.

In chapter i it is stated that Nathanael was brought to Christ by Philip, and in chapter xxi he is associated with Peter and Thomas and the sons of Zebedee and two other disciples. It is notice-

able that in the lists of the Apostles given in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt. x, Mark iii, Luke vi.) the names of Philip and Bartholomew are joined together ; and since Bartholomew is a patronymic, meaning the son of Tolmai, and that Apostle must have had another name, it is not unnatural to suppose that he was the disciple whom Philip brought to our Lord, his other name being Nathanael. In the list in Acts i, however, Philip is associated with Thomas ; though Bartholomew is mentioned immediately after them, but coupled with Matthew.

It is clear that St. John's account of the manner in which some of the Apostles first became attached to our Lord in no way conflicts with, but rather explains, the call of Peter and Andrew and the two sons of Zebedee, mentioned in Matt. iv. 18-22, Mark i. 16-20, and, with a variation in details, in Luke v. 1-11. The question whether St. Luke's narrative refers to the same incident as that recorded by the first two Synoptists, or to another, is outside the purview of the present treatise. But the call, or calls, mentioned by them occurred at the beginning of our Lord's Galilean ministry, after the events recorded in the first four chapters of St. John's Gospel, and involved a summons to forsake the occupation of fishermen, and to become daily companions of our Lord and, ultimately, Apostles. St. John describes the way in which some of them first became attached to our Lord, and believers in His mission. It adds much to the

credulity of the story of the Synoptists (which appears startling on the supposition that He had hitherto been a complete stranger to the four fishermen) when we learn from the Fourth Gospel that some of them, at least, had previously known Him, and had personally attained to a belief in Him.

#### 4. THE FIRST RETURN TO GALILEE

##### Ch. ii. 1-12

Our Lord had left His home at Nazareth to be baptized by the Baptist, and had afterwards spent forty days in the wilderness. He was now going to begin His ministry, not in Galilee, but in Judæa. Before doing so, however, we learn from St. John that He returned for a few days to Galilee, no doubt to apprise His mother of the intended change in His mode of life, and make the domestic arrangements rendered necessary by it.

The one incident in that visit to Galilee which the Evangelist records, is the marriage in Cana (ch. ii. 1-11) ; at which we are told that our Lord, by performing the sign of turning water into wine, manifested His glory—the glory of grace and truth, or, as we may say, of graciousness and naturalness, spoken of in the Prologue (ch. i. 14).

His mother was present, and when she applied to Him, as, no doubt, in their home at Nazareth she had so often successfully done in case of any difficulty arising, He took the opportunity of

teaching her the needed lesson, that their relations were now changed, that she must no longer regard Him and treat Him as her son. It was the same lesson which He enforced later, when, according to the Synoptists, He refused to see her, and said, "Who is My mother, and who are My brethren? . . . Whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother" (Matt. xii. 46-50 ; Mark iii. 31-35 ; Luke viii. 19-21). And when, on another occasion, a woman in the crowd, who was listening to Him, cried out "Blessed is the womb that bare Thee and the paps which Thou hast sucked," He replied, "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it" (Luke xi. 27, 28). And once again, when He was on the cross, He tenderly repeated the same lesson, by bidding her adopt the beloved disciple as her son in His place (John xix. 26, 27).

It is stated that His disciples also were present at the marriage; and we may believe that here again the Evangelist was one of them, and that we have the story of what occurred from an eye-witness. But who were the other disciples present? It would be a grave mistake to suppose that wherever the expression "His disciples" occurs, either in the Fourth Gospel or in the Synoptics, the same persons are always meant. The expression in each case refers to the followers who happened to be with our Lord at the time. No doubt, after the

appointment of the twelve Apostles, it generally included them, and sometimes refers exclusively to them; but we must in all cases understand it according to the context. Here it probably included the Evangelist, and perhaps Philip and Nathanael, and possibly a few others. But if it also included Peter and Andrew, they were, of course, also among the disciples who went down with our Lord to Capernaum after the marriage (ch. ii. 12); and we must suppose that they thereupon returned to their fishing. For we are told that, a few days afterwards, "Jesus went up to Jerusalem" for the coming Passover (verse 13). Nothing is said about His disciples going up with Him, and we are rather left to infer that they did not, as a body, do so. But did the Evangelist go up? If he was a Judæan disciple of priestly family, we may be sure that he did; and if he was the younger son of Zebedee, having, in that case, a priestly connection with Jerusalem, it is probable that he did.

## 5. THE JUDÆAN MINISTRY

### Ch. ii. 13–iii. 36

From chapter ii. 13 onwards, with the exception of chapters iv and vi, the Fourth Gospel, though it mentions that our Lord was sometimes elsewhere, records no important sayings or doings in the course of His ministry, except those of which Jerusalem



or the country of Judæa was the scene. An argument against its historicity has been based upon an apparent inconsistency between this record and the narratives in the Synoptic Gospels, which, it is alleged, imply that His ministry was confined to Galilee and the north of Palestine until His final entry into Jerusalem, and leave no room for an initial ministry at Jerusalem and in Judæa, lasting from the Passover of one year (John ii. 13), till about four months before the harvest of the following year (ch. iv. 35), and for the subsequent visits to Jerusalem mentioned by St. John.

But this is to ignore dates and distinct allusions in those Gospels. No doubt, if we had only St. Luke's Gospel, we should be led to suppose that our Lord came to Galilee and began His continuous ministry there immediately after His forty days' temptation in the wilderness (Luke iv. 13, 14). But St. Matthew and St. Mark distinctly tell us, that it was after John the Baptist had been put in prison that our Lord came to Galilee (Matt. iv. 12 ; Mark i. 14), implying that there was an interval of time between His Temptation and His arrival in Galilee. St. Matthew's language is particularly noticeable: "Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison [*or delivered up*], He departed [*R.V. withdrew, Gr. ἀνεχώρησεν*] into Galilee." From whence did He come or depart or withdraw thither? The two Synoptists do not say, but it could scarcely have been from elsewhere

than Judæa, the region in which the Fourth Gospel depicts Him as having up to that time carried on His work (ch. iii. 22, iv. 3). But they do not leave us entirely to conjecture on this point. For they both tell us that, at the beginning of His Galilean ministry, there followed Him great multitudes, not only from Galilee and Decapolis, but also from Jerusalem and Judæa and from beyond Jordan (Matt. iv. 25, Mark iii. 7, 8). What could have led people to come to Him all the way from Jerusalem and Judæa, unless they had known of previous sayings and doings on His part nearer their home?

The Fourth Gospel distinctly represents our Lord's long initial ministry in Judæa as having taken place while the Baptist was still at large (ch. iii. 22-30). It does not mention the fact of his imprisonment, but states that our Lord left Judæa when He knew that the Pharisees had heard that He was making and baptizing more disciples than the Baptist (ch. iv. 1). This is quite consistent with the Baptist having been imprisoned. They hoped that the baptismal movement would be stifled by that step. When they found that our Lord and His disciples were continuing it with increased energy, His life, or, at any rate, His liberty became imperilled, and He thereupon left Judæa and retired into Galilee. The first two Synoptists state that He did so after the Baptist had been imprisoned, but do not give the reason for His doing so. The reason is supplied by the

Fourth Gospel, in which we may notice, in passing, that we have a touch of historic accuracy in the statement that "Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples" (ch. iv. 2).

We find, moreover, in the Synoptic Gospels another significant allusion to visits of our Lord to Jerusalem. We are told that on one of His last days on earth He uttered the feeling lament, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not?" (Matt. xxiii. 37). How often? This could not reasonably refer to the few previous days of that visit of His to the city, during which they were spoken; and the similar lament, recorded in Luke xiii. 34, if it was actually uttered in Galilee, as its position in the narrative would lead us to suppose, certainly could not have referred to those days. Yet, if we possessed only the Synoptic Gospels, we should have no clue as to what else the words referred. But with the accounts in the Fourth Gospel of our Lord's early ministry in Jerusalem and Judæa, and of His subsequent visits to Jerusalem at feast times, the words become intelligible.

We notice, too, that St. Luke parenthetically refers to our Lord's stay in the house of Martha and Mary, in a certain village (Luke x. 38-42). As the Fourth Gospel tells us that this village was Bethany, close to Jerusalem, we infer that though St. Luke

does not indicate that this was the case, His stay there must have taken place during a visit to Jerusalem which is not alluded to in any of the Synoptic Gospels. The mention of it tallies with the statement in the Fourth Gospel (ch. xi. 5) that our Lord loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus, implying, as this statement does, that He had had frequent friendly intercourse with them.

We conclude, then, that the other Gospels confirm the historic truth of the Fourth Gospel as to the first and subsequent visits of our Lord to Jerusalem and Judæa having actually taken place. We may account for the omission in the Synoptic Gospels of any details of these visits in either or both of two ways; namely, (*a*) by the structure and scope of these Gospels which until their close are wholly concerned with our Lord's Galilean ministry, and (*b*) by the fact that the Apostles from whom the contents of the first three Gospels were derived, did not, at any rate as a body, accompany Him in the visits. This last consideration is, of course, immensely strengthened if it was the case that none of the Apostles was with Him during the visits, but that we owe the account of them to an independent Judæan disciple and not to the younger son of Zebedee. Whether the Evangelist gives us true accounts of what occurred during those visits is, of course, another question which we must examine in detail.

## 6. THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

Ch. ii. 13-22

We infer from John ii. 13-16, that our Lord cleansed the Temple at His first visit to Jerusalem, casting out from it the sellers of oxen, sheep and doves, and the money-changers. A similar cleansing of the Temple is recorded by the three other Evangelists at the beginning of His last visit to Jerusalem, which ended in His death (Matt. xxi. ; Mark xi. ; Luke xix.). From the position given to it in the narratives of St. Matthew and St. Luke, we should infer that it took place on the same day as His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. But St. Mark distinctly tells us that it happened on the following morning ; and this statement, both from its definiteness and for other reasons, should be regarded as correct.

It is impossible to suppose that the incident occurred on one afternoon, and again on the following morning. But there is no reason for thinking that it could not have been repeated after an interval of two years, and that the Synoptists and St. John must record the same event, the Synoptists placing it at the end, and St. John placing it at the beginning, of our Lord's ministry. The impossibility of its having occurred again after a considerable interval of time rests on the assumption that the Temple, when once cleansed by our Lord, must have remained cleansed. But that this was



the case is very improbable. It is far more likely that the expelled money-changers and sellers of cattle and doves quickly returned to their old places within the Temple, when the menace of our Lord's presence had been withdrawn. And we know, as a fact, that the booths in which this traffic was carried on existed till about three years before the destruction of the Temple. They are referred to in Rabbinical writings as the booths of the sons of Hanan (the Annas of John xviii. 13); and that priestly family derived a large income from them. If they were restored after our Lord's cleansing of the Temple during the last week of His life, it is natural to suppose that they would have been quickly restored after a similar action on His part at the beginning of His ministry.

We conclude then that when He first came to Jerusalem to offer Himself to the people there as their Messiah, He cleansed the Temple, partly as an act of duty to His Father, Whose house it was, and partly to call the attention of the people to Himself. We know from Luke iv. 17-21 that, at the outset of His Galilean ministry, He applied to Himself the ancient prophecies just as the Baptist had done. And we can hardly doubt that when He cleansed the Temple, He had in mind the prophecy of Malachi which, after referring to the sending of the preparatory messenger, fulfilled in the Baptist, proceeds, "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple, even the



messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in. . . . And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and He shall purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (Mal. iii. 1-3). And He renewed the act of purification when He came for the last time to Jerusalem, with the same double object. On the first occasion, recorded in the Fourth Gospel, His rebuke was simply "Make not My Father's house a house of merchandise" (ch. ii. 16). On the second occasion, recorded in the other Gospels, His words were far sterner: "It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of robbers" (Matt. xxi. 14; Mark xi. 17).

It is remarkable, too, that in one particular the first two Gospels confirm St. John's narrative of the first cleansing of the Temple (*ἱερόν*). They state that at the trial of our Lord before Caiaphas, two witnesses came forward and testified, "This man said, I am able to destroy the Sanctuary (*ναός*) of God and to build it in three days" (Matt. xxvi. 61; Mark xiv. 58); but no hint is given in either Gospel of His ever having used words to which that meaning could be attached. St. John, however, states, that the cleansing of the Temple which he records was challenged by the Jews, who asked our Lord for a sign to prove His authority for doing it, and that He replied: "Destroy this sanctuary (*ναός*), and in three days I will build it up" (ch.

ii. 19). This was no doubt the utterance of which the witnesses gave at His trial a distorted testimony. It was of such a remarkable character that the Evangelist, who probably was present when it was spoken, did not forget it ; nor did others, whether the impression which it made upon them was favourable or unfavourable.

In closing his account of the incident, St. John intimates that our Lord during this visit to Jerusalem performed other acts or signs of His Messiahship which carried conviction to the minds of many, but that this conviction was not strong enough to make them His whole-hearted disciples (ch. ii. 23-25). It is clear from this and other passages in the Gospels, that during the whole of our Lord's ministry, besides His devoted followers on the one hand, and His persistent enemies on the other, there was everywhere a large and fluctuating body of persons who were at times favourably disposed to Him, and at other times assumed an indifferent or hostile attitude towards Him.

This, then, was the first of the several occasions to which our Lord referred, when, towards the close of His ministry, He lamented that He would often have gathered the people of Jerusalem to Himself, but they would not come (Matt. xxiii. 37 ; Luke xiii. 34).

## 7. THE INTERVIEW WITH NICODEMUS

## Ch. iii. 1-15

We come now to the first of the discussions which are the principal feature of the first part of the Fourth Gospel, but which have a parallel in the controversies recorded in the other Gospels as having taken place during our Lord's last visit to Jerusalem. The first and second of these discussions were with individuals, the rest with a crowd of disputants in a Galilean synagogue, or in the precincts of the Temple, or elsewhere. To what extent can historic accuracy be claimed for St. John's reports of these discussions? It is clear that, at best, they can only give us the substance of what was said on each occasion. They cannot be *verbatim* reports, for each discussion must have lasted a considerable time, and must have been carried on with many more words and sentences than are recorded in the Gospel. As regards some of them, though a cursory reading of the narrative might lead us to suppose that they were begun and ended without a break, we shall see reason to conclude that this was not the case, but that they were continued at intervals from day to day, or perhaps from Sabbath to Sabbath. The utmost that it was possible for the Evangelist to do, was to give us a substantially accurate *précis* of the arguments used; and it is evident that a *précis*, however concise, of the whole discussion, will give a more

correct historic impression of what was actually said than a *verbatim* report of a portion only of the discussion. A *précis*, however, must necessarily be somewhat coloured by the mind of the individual who makes it ; and to that extent it may be conceded that the critics are right who maintain that the records of our Lord's discourses in the Fourth Gospel reflect the thoughts of the Evangelist. But this does not detract from their substantial historical accuracy.

Nicodemus is stated in the Gospel to have been a ruler of the Jews, that is to say, a member of the Sanhedrin. The Evangelist appears to have been acquainted with him, mentioning him in ch. vii. 50, as an opponent of too hasty a condemnation of our Lord, and again in ch. xix. 39, as a companion of Joseph of Arimathæa in our Lord's burial. We may reasonably therefore suppose that St. John was present at this interview of our Lord with Nicodemus, and reports what he actually himself heard. We learn from Jewish history that there was a famous Jew of that name, Nikdamon Ben Gorion, who took a leading part in opposing the Zealots, and in advocating the maintenance of peace with Rome. If he was the individual referred to in the Gospel, it is clear that he never actually became a Christian ; and this, as well as the merely subordinate part which he evidently took in our Lord's entombment, will account for no mention of him being made in the other Gospels.

As regards the discussion itself, the report of it bears all the marks of historic accuracy. We cannot suppose that it was abruptly started by the statement of our Lord as to the necessity of a new birth recorded in ch. iii. 3. Nicodemus came to consult Him, and must have first asked Him a question to which this statement was the reply. And both from what was going on at the time, and from the line which the discussion took, we can have no difficulty in inferring the purport of that question. The proceedings of the Baptist in baptizing for the remission of sins, and as a qualification for entry into the coming kingdom of God, had roused a controversy in the whole Jewish world, some taking one side, and some the other. In verse 25 it is said, that there arose a questioning on the part of the Baptist's disciples with a Jew, or Jews, about purifying. What this particular question was, we are not told; but it may have arisen in Jerusalem, or have extended to Jerusalem, before the visit of Nicodemus to our Lord. At any rate he must have come to consult our Lord about some points raised by the Baptist's proceedings. Our Lord, as we know from St. Luke's account of His erudition even as a boy (Luke ii. 47), was well qualified to discuss the matter.

At His own baptism, water and the Spirit had been associated together, and in His replies to Nicodemus He emphasises the connection between

them, and at the same time asserts His own position as a heaven-sent Teacher.

## 8. THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

### Ch. iv. 1-42

The next reported conversation of our Lord, that with the Samaritan woman, took place when no third person was present. The Evangelist must, therefore, have obtained the purport of it either from the woman or from our Lord Himself, or possibly from both. We must assume him to have been one of the disciples who accompanied our Lord on His journey to Galilee, and they would all be anxious to learn what had passed between Him and the woman, during their absence in the town. We are told that they did not dare to question Him immediately upon the subject (ch. iv. 27) ; but it does not follow that He did not afterwards communicate to them the substance of the conversation. At any rate, however, the woman was eager to tell all about it to everyone she met (vers. 28, 29).

Our Lord had already offered Himself as the Messiah to the acceptance of the Jews at Jerusalem ; and it was, therefore, quite natural that He should proclaim Himself as such to the woman of Samaria. As a Jew, He naturally taught her that Gerizim, the holy mountain of the Samaritans, had no exclusive claim to be a place of worship. But as



one Who was more than a Jew, He likewise taught that Jerusalem also had no such exclusive claim.

## 9. THE GALILEAN MINISTRY

Chs. iv. 43-54, vi

We come now to a point where the narratives of all the four Gospels join. St. Matthew says that when our Lord heard that the Baptist was delivered up, He withdrew into Galilee, and leaving Nazareth came and dwelt at Capernaum (ch. iv. 12, 13). St. Mark says that when the Baptist was delivered up, He came into Galilee (ch. i. 14). St. Luke says that He returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and came to Nazareth (ch. iv. 14, 16), and St. John says that He came into Galilee (ch. iv. 43), and he then mentions an incident which happened at Cana, where he still appears to have been in our Lord's company. As Cana lies between Nazareth and Capernaum, we may assume that it occurred during our Lord's journey from the one place to the other, mentioned by St. Matthew (ch. iv. 13), and by St. Luke (ch. iv. 30, 31). This incident was the arrival of a man of royal standing (*βασιλικός*), who begged our Lord to come down to Capernaum and heal his dying son, and was sent home with the assurance that his son was restored to life.

This, the Evangelist says, was the second sign or miracle that our Lord performed in Galilee, but it

is not mentioned in the other Gospels. Canon J. M. Wilson comments on the incident in *The Acts of the Apostles, Translated from the Codex Bezae* (London, S.P.C.K., 1923), Introduction, pp. 12-14. He suggests that this man of royal standing, who, St. John tells us, as the result of his son's cure, believed with his whole house (ch. iv. 53), was no other than Manaen, the foster-brother of Herod, who is mentioned in Acts xiii. 1 as one of the prophets and teachers at Antioch, at the time when Paul and Barnabas started on their first missionary journey.

He must have heard of our Lord, Dr. Wilson thinks, from the Baptist. He may have been with the soldiers on service who asked the Baptist, "What must we do?" (Luke iii. 14). He would certainly have been drawn to the ascetic in the wilderness by hereditary sympathies, since his father or grandfather, the friend of Herod the Great, was an Essene (see Josephus, *Antiq. Jud.* xv. 10 (5)).

Dr. Wilson points out that if the conversation with his servants mentioned in ch. iv. 51, 52, was not a pure invention of the Evangelist, the report of it must have come from the royal man himself; and that there must be some such explanation as the connection of a man of high rank in Herod's court with the Baptist on the one hand, and with our Lord on the other hand, to account for the manifestly exceptional treatment of the Baptist as

a prisoner (Mark vi. 20), for the free access to him of his disciples (Luke vii. 18), and for the existence at Herod's court of disciples both of the Baptist and of our Lord, men and women of high position, such as Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward (Luke viii. 3), and for Manaen's early hearing of our Lord. He may, perhaps, have been one of the disciples sent by the Baptist to inquire of our Lord, whether He was actually the promised Messiah (Matt. xi. 2-6; Luke vii. 19-23). This, at any rate, as Dr. Wilson suggests, would give a point to our Lord's reference, recorded in Matt. xi. 8 and Luke vii. 25, to those in soft raiment and gorgeous apparel who are to be found in the houses and courts of kings. And if the reading of Codex Bezae in Acts xi. 27 is genuine, of which the translation is, "And there was much rejoicing, and when we were gathered together, one of them named Agabus," etc., it would appear that St. Luke was at Antioch at the same time as Manaen and must have been well acquainted with him. He was, therefore, probably one of the "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word" from whom the materials for the Third Gospel were derived (Luke i. 2). In particular, the Evangelist would have learnt from him what took place at our Lord's trial before Herod, which is only recorded in the Third Gospel (ch. xxiii. 7-12), and what was Herod's attitude towards our Lord and towards Pilate (Ib.).

If it is asked why this incident of the healing of

the son of the βασιλικός is not mentioned by any of the Synoptists, we can only reply that we do not know for certain, but can only conjecture, the reasons for their having mentioned some, and omitted others of our Lord's many acts of healing. They seem, however, to have selected specimen incidents, and they narrate that of the healing of the centurion's servant, which is very similar in its circumstances to that of the healing of the royal man's son, and contained details which it was highly important to record (Matt. viii. 5-13 ; Luke vii. 2-10). They may, therefore, have thought it inexpedient to narrate another very similar case ; or else they may have refrained from doing so, out of regard for the feelings of the royal man himself, especially if he was in fact the Christian prophet Manaen.

## 10. THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

### Ch. vi. 1-21

Transposing, as we have seen that it is necessary to do, chs. v and vi of the Gospel, we come now to the Feeding of the Five Thousand, an event which is recorded in all the four Gospels, with such slight variations as always occur in independent reports of the same incident (Matt. xiv. 15-21 ; Mark vi. 35-44 ; Luke ix. 12-17 ; John vi. 1-14).

In the present inquiry we are not concerned with these variations, nor with the different motives assigned by the Synoptists for our Lord and His

disciples being at the spot where the miracle was performed. Probably all these motives conspired to take them there. In St. John's account we notice those personal touches which are to be found in his other narratives, but which are wanting in the narratives of the Synoptists. He alone mentions the part which Philip and Andrew had in the transaction, and the fact that it was a lad who had the five loaves and two fishes. Again, he alone mentions that after the miracle the people wanted to take our Lord by force and make Him king (verse 15).

The natural conclusion is, that the Evangelist was an eye-witness of the scene. If he was the younger son of Zebedee, of course he was ; but if, as seems more probable, he was a favoured Judæan disciple of our Lord, we must assume that at this time he was associated with the twelve Apostles in, so to speak, an unofficial capacity, and a member of their company ; though, on account of his having no recognised position, his presence is not mentioned in any of the Gospels. On this hypothesis, he was, of course, with them on their return voyage across the Lake of Capernaum.

## II. THE DISCOURSE ON THE BREAD OF LIFE

### Ch. vi. 22-65

As already pointed out, the Feeding of the Five Thousand and the four subsequent miracles, of which we have an account in the Fourth Gospel

(including the supplementary chapter), appear to be narrated not so much for the sake of our Lord's power which they display, as for the sake of the discussions or conversations, or, in the case of the raising of Lazarus, the consequences, to which they gave rise. And the miracle which we have just been considering was followed by the controversy as to the Bread of Life, which is only recorded by St. John, and which we must believe that he himself heard.

A cursory reading of ch. vi. 25-58 would lead to the supposition that the whole of the controversy took place on the day after the miracle in some place or building where our Lord happened to be. But in verse 59 we read, "These things said He in the synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum." Clearly then, the controversy, though begun on that day, was continued in a synagogue on at least one and probably more than one Sabbath Day, and very possibly on some of the intervening working days. It is plain, therefore, that the Evangelist only gives us a brief summary of the discussion, though he probably records some of the actual words which our Lord uttered in the course of it.

As it is not reported or alluded to in the other Gospels, what opinion are we to form as to its historicity, which critics are not disposed to admit? They suggest that the Evangelist has thrown back into his narrative ideas which had their origin in the subsequent institution of the Lord's Supper,



and they point out that these ideas, which have assumed so large a place in the theology of the Church, had already begun to develop before the death of the aged Evangelist. But we are not bound to accept this view.

The Synoptists tell us that, shortly after the miraculous feeding, our Lord cautioned His disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, meaning their doctrine (Matt. xvi. ; Mark viii.). It may be objected that if they had heard the discussion which we are considering, they could not have mistaken His meaning in this caution, as they are narrated to have done. But they are, throughout the Gospel narrative, represented as having been slow to take in and understand His teaching.

Then we remember that in the wilderness, in His preparation for His ministry, the truth, that man doth not live by bread alone, became fixed in His mind by the temptation to ignore it, which assailed Him. There is more than one passage in the Hebrew Scriptures which speaks metaphorically of eating the Word of God : " How sweet are Thy words unto my taste, yea sweeter than honey to my mouth " (Ps. cxix. 103 ; cp. Isa. lv. 1 ; Jer. xv. 16 ; Ezek. ii. 8, 9, iii. 1-3). Our Lord therefore, recognising that He was, in Himself, the Word of God, might teach the necessity that men should eat Him, and recognising Himself as the Messiah, described in the passage of the book of Enoch already referred to as a lamb, and designated as such in His own

person by the Baptist, might use the bold expression of their eating His flesh and drinking His blood (ch. vi. 54-56). As we have only a summary of His actual teaching, we do not know how He explained His language to those whom He was addressing, beyond the hint given us in verse 63.

Another objection which has been urged against the historicity of this discourse, as well as against that of our Lord's utterances at Jerusalem recorded in the Fourth Gospel, is that their theological tone differs entirely from that of His teaching recorded in the Synoptic Gospels. The difference is obvious, but it can be explained without impugning the historical accuracy of the reports, either in the Fourth Gospel, or in the others. And the explanation is actually furnished to us by one of the Synoptists.

In Luke iv. 17-27, we find a discourse of our Lord delivered in a synagogue in Galilee, which is pitched in exactly the same key as the Johannine discourses. We infer, therefore, that our Lord suited His teaching to the occasion and the audience. To His own disciples and the friendly people in Galilee, it was given in parables, and simple precepts. But in the Synagogue of Galilee, and in the Temple at Jerusalem, where He was addressing critical and often hostile audiences, it was of the kind which we find reported in Luke iv. and in the Fourth Gospel.

## 12. JUDAS ISCARIOT

Ch. vi. 66-71

In narrating the effects of the discussion at Capernaum on those who heard it, the Evangelist mentions Judas Iscariot by name. Finding that many of His followers were alienated by what He had said, our Lord asked His Apostles, "Will ye also go away?" St. Peter, on behalf of them all, disclaimed any idea of doing so; but our Lord, with His insight into their hearts, said, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (ch. vi. 70), meaning, as St. John adds, Judas Iscariot. The other Evangelists give no hint of how it was that Judas became a traitor, but St. John furnishes the key to the mystery. He had evidently joined our Lord from motives of worldly aggrandisement, in which it is clear that some, at any rate, of the other Apostles at first more or less shared. But while they were gradually educated to higher things, he remained on his original low level. He must have been bitterly disappointed when our Lord refused to be made king, after the miraculous feeding (ch. vi. 15); and the discussion at Capernaum made him suspect that he had attached himself not to One who was to assume an earthly sovereignty, but to a mere spiritual enthusiast. He did not at once desert our Lord, but remained with the other Apostles in the hope that something might yet occur to alter the course of

events ; and meanwhile he administered and mis-applied for his own advantage the finances of the company (ch. xii. 6).

His worldly expectations received another shock when, at the supper at Bethany, our Lord accepted Mary's anointment as a forestalling of His burial, and again when the triumphal entry into Jerusalem did not result in the assumption of an earthly kingdom. Judas then became convinced that he was linked to a losing cause, and resolved to extricate himself from it in the most advantageous way to himself that he could. And so he betrayed his Master.

But of all this, the Synoptists give us no hint. We only learn it from the Fourth Gospel.

### 13. THE THREE INTERMEDIATE VISITS TO JERUSALEM

Chs. v., vii.—x

Returning now to ch. v, St. John tells us that our Lord went up to Jerusalem for the Passover, which in ch. vi. 4 was stated to be at hand.

It is probable that the Evangelist went with our Lord, and that, unless he was in fact the son of Zebedee, he did not again visit Galilee until after the Resurrection. In that case he obtained from hearsay the conversation between our Lord and His brethren, as to His attending the feast of Tabernacles

(ch. vii. 2-8), and it is easy to see how he would have done so. He would have been eagerly on the look out for our Lord as the time of the feast approached ; and not meeting Him, but meeting His brethren, would have learnt from them what they knew about His movements. It appears clear from verse 10, that our Lord on that occasion eventually came up unattended by any of His disciples ; and probably at the preceding Passover, He was attended by the Evangelist St. John, but not by any of the Apostles, unless the Evangelist was one of them. This would, of itself, account for the Synoptic Gospels containing no mention of our Lord's intermediate visits to Jerusalem recorded in the Fourth Gospel.

The disciples whom that Gospel mentions as being in attendance on our Lord during those visits, would in that case be Judæan disciples.

The events and discussions recorded in chs. v. and vii. to x. of the Fourth Gospel are separated by intervals of about six months and three further months ; the healing of the impotent man having taken place at the Passover, and the giving of sight to the man born blind at the Feast of Tabernacles, while the concluding discussion was held during the Feast of the Dedication in the winter. But it will be convenient to consider them together, since they represent three further attempts of our Lord to gather the people of Jerusalem unto Himself.

And first, a word must be said about the miracles.

These miracles clearly have their exact parallels in the other Gospels.

The imparting of strength to the impotent man, by the simple command, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk" (ch. v. 8, 9) is similar to the cure of the palsied man at Capernaum, by a like command (Matt. ix. 2-8; Mark ii. 2-12; Luke v. 18-26). And the giving of sight to the blind man by anointing his eyes with clay (ch. ix. 6, 7), can be compared with the acts by which our Lord cured the man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, by the Sea of Galilee (Mark vii. 32-37), and the blind man at Bethsaida (Mark viii. 22-26).

In the case of the healing of the impotent man, minute details are given as to the spot where it took place, and the circumstances attending it. In describing the spot, the Evangelist says, "there *is* in Jerusalem . . . a pool." In a narrative written after the destruction of Jerusalem we should have expected to find "there *was*." Dr. Burney points out that if, it was originally written in Aramaic, there would in that language have been no difference between "is" and "was." We may adopt that explanation of the present tense in the Greek Gospel, or else suppose that the narrative was originally committed to writing, either in Aramaic or in Greek, before A.D. 70.

In the account of the giving of sight to the man born blind, we have again minute details of the miracle, and also of the examination of the man



and his parents by the Jewish authorities. They give us the impression of being supplied to us by an eye-witness of the miracle, and by one who was well acquainted with what was going on in the Jewish world.

It is, however, not so much against the miracles, as against the discourses recorded in these five chapters, that adverse criticism has been directed. As recorded, they clearly contain only a summary of our Lord's teaching, with the controversy aroused by it, which extended over many hours and days. On the second of the three visits, we are told that He began to teach in the Temple in the middle of the feast of Tabernacles, and continued to do so till the last day of the feast (ch. vii. 14, 37). But these chapters profess to contain an accurate *précis* of what was said by our Lord and His opponents; and it is objected that we find in them a delineation of His character and claims incompatible with the picture of Him which the Synoptic Gospels present to us. Our estimate of their substantial historical accuracy must therefore largely depend on whether this objection can be sustained or not.

We notice, then, five leading characteristics in the discourses in question :

- (1) Our Lord's power in argument ;
- (2) His claim to superiority over the Jewish Sabbath ;
- (3) His claim to superiority over the Jewish Scriptures, and all other teachers ;

(4) His claim to be in a unique relation to God the Father ; and

(5) His severity towards His opponents.

To what extent can these characteristics be found in the other Gospels ?

### (1) *Our Lord's Power in Argument*

Throughout these discourses, our Lord is represented as versed in all Rabbinic lore, and able to confute in argument His learned opponents. They were astonished at His erudition. "How knoweth this man *γράμματα* [Rabbinic lore]," they said, "having never learned ?" (ch. vii. 15). And the Temple officials who were sent to arrest Him, and who were accustomed to hear discussions among the learned Rabbis and the lawyers and scribes, declared, "Never man spake like this man" (verse 46).

But we find support for this in the Synoptic Gospels. St. Luke tells us that when, as a boy of twelve years of age, He sat in the midst of the teachers of the law in the Temple, they were astonished at His understanding (Luke ii. 46, 47). And His refutations of His opponents, recorded in these chapters, find an exact parallel in the Synoptic narratives of His silencing in turn the Pharisees and Sadducees on the question of paying tribute to Cæsar, the effect of the resurrection on marriage relationships, and the position of Christ as both David's son and David's Lord.

(2) *Claim to Superiority over the Sabbath*

Our Lord performed both the miracles recorded in these chapters on the Sabbath Day ; and the fact of His doing so was made a ground of accusation against Him by His opponents (chs. v. 16, ix. 16). St. John does not dwell on this particular point ; but it is elaborated more at length in the other Gospels, in which we find records of His performing acts of healing on the Sabbath Day, and of His justifying His disciples in plucking ears of corn on that day, and of His claiming to be Himself “ Lord of the Sabbath ” (Matt. xii. 1-14 ; Mark ii. 23-28, iii. 1-6 ; Luke vi. 1-11).

(3) *Claim to Superiority over the Jewish Scriptures, and other Teachers*

Our Lord in these discussions puts forward the claim, which He had already made in the discussion at Capernaum, to be the One Teacher and Guide, superior to the Scriptures, and to all who had preceded Him. He says to His opponents, “ Ye investigate the Scriptures, because in them ye think that ye have eternal life, and they are they which bear witness of Me, and yet ye will not come unto Me that ye may have life ” (ch. v. 39, 40). The Jewish Scriptures point to Him, but He is above them. Later on, He again refers to them in connection with His claim to Divinity. “ Is it not written in *your* law,” He asks His opponents, “ I

said, Ye are gods ? ” (Ps. lxxxii. 6)—“ If, then, He called them gods unto whom the Word of God came, and if [as you hold] the Scripture cannot be broken, say ye of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God ? ” (ch. x. 34-36).

Clearly, here, our Lord used a syllogism to silence His adversaries very much as He subsequently used a syllogism based on Ps. cx for that purpose (Matt. xxii. 41-46 ; Mark xii. 35-37 ; Luke xx. 41-44).

The Synoptic Gospels show us that He Himself boldly claimed the right to break the Jewish Scriptures. In the Sermon on the Mount, we find five times repeated, “ Ye have heard how it was said . . . But I say unto you ” (Matt. v.). And if we accept the rendering of the Revised Version of Mark vii. 19 : “ This He said, making all meats clean,” He abolished on His own authority the strict Levitical precepts as to what animal food was clean, and what unclean.

“ Ye will not come to Me that ye may have life ” (ch. v. 40). Our Lord throughout these discourses claims to be the Saviour and Leader and Teacher of mankind. “ If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink ” (ch. vii. 37). “ I am the light of the world ” (ch. viii. 12). “ If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed ” (Ib. 36). “ Your father Abraham rejoiced [or desired] to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad. . . . Before Abraham was

I am " (Ib. 56, 58). " I am the door of the sheep. All that came before Me are thieves and robbers. . . . I am the good Shepherd " (ch. x. 7, 14).

But we find complete parallels, in the Synoptic Gospels, to all these claims and assertions.

" Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls " (Matt. xi. 28, 29). According to St. Luke, our Lord at the very outset of His Galilean ministry, publicly claimed the fulfilment in Himself of the prophecy in Isa. lxi. " The Spirit of Jehovah is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He hath sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to proclaim the acceptable year of Jehovah " (Luke iv. 17-21). And the same Evangelist tells us, that He said on another occasion, " Many prophets and kings desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not, and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not " (Ib. x. 24).

In the first two Synoptic Gospels we find the record of our Lord's applying to Himself the prophecy in the book of Zechariah, when He said to His disciples, " All ye shall be offended in Me this night, for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad " (Matt. xxvi. 31; Mark xiv. 27). In claiming to be the Good Shepherd, our Lord doubtless took to Himself

the prophecy of Ezekiel (ch. xxxiv. 23), "I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David." And as to the fact of His having done so, the Fourth Gospel is corroborated by two earlier writings, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the First Epistle of St. Peter, in one of which He is called "the great Shepherd of the Sheep" (Heb. xiii. 20), and in the other, "The Shepherd and Bishop of your souls," and "the chief Shepherd" (1 Pet. ii. 25, v. 4).

(4) *Claim to Unique Relationship with God the Father*

Not only in these discourses but throughout the Fourth Gospel, our Lord is represented as claiming to stand in a unique relation to God as His Father ; and it is this representation which has chiefly led critics to question its historicity, and to suggest that it throws back into its narrative a conception of our Lord's personality which had subsequently grown up and which had become crystallised towards the close of the first century. In particular, it is said that the Fourth Gospel presents from the outset a full-blown conception of our Lord's Divinity, His Divine Sonship, and His Messiahship, on the part both of Himself, and of His disciples, which, according to the Synoptic Gospels, was only gradually developed during the course of His ministry, and did not actually emerge and become prominent until St. Peter's confession at Cæsarea



Philippi, recorded in Matthew xvi, Mark viii, Luke ix.

In order, therefore, to determine the historical value of the Fourth Gospel, it is of supreme importance to ascertain whether on this point it is, or is not, substantiated by those earlier records of our Lord's acts and sayings which we possess in the Synoptic Gospels.

There is no doubt about the treatment of the subject in the Fourth Gospel, both in the narratives of the discussions at Jerusalem and elsewhere. The Baptist is represented as openly declaring, in consequence of what occurred at our Lord's baptism, that He was *the* Son of God (ch. i. 34). His earliest disciples, Andrew and Philip and Nathanael, are in like manner represented as from the first recognising Him as the Messiah, the Son of God (Ib. 41, 45, 49). Our Lord Himself at once admits the fact (Ib. 50, 51) and maintains that character throughout the whole narrative.

It is the keynote of all His acts and utterances. He cleanses the Temple because it is *His* Father's house (ch. ii. 16). He reveals Himself to the woman of Samaria as the Messiah or Christ (ch. iv. 25, 26). At Capernaum, He speaks of *My* Father (ch. vi. 32), and of His own special connection with His Father (Ib. 37, 39, 40, 44, 46, 57 ; though possibly, verse 46 is a comment of the Evangelist). And in the discourses at Jerusalem, we find the expressions " My Father worketh even until now and I work. . . .

The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing ; for what things soever He doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner ” (ch. v. 17, 19).

It is possible that verses 21–23 and 26, 27, and perhaps also verses 28, 29, are interspersed comments of the Evangelist ; and, in any case, it is not necessary to refer to them, as they only restate our Lord’s claim to Divine Sonship in a different context. But we find again in the same chapter “ I am come in My Father’s name ” (verse 43) ; and in verse 18, the Evangelist tells us that the Jews sought to kill Him, because He called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

Subsequent chapters record that our Lord repeated the claim even more emphatically. “ Ye know neither Me nor My Father. If ye knew Me, ye would know My Father also ” (ch. viii. 19). “ I speak the things which I have seen with My Father ” (Ib. 38). “ I and My Father are one ” (ch. x. 30). “ The Father is in Me and I in the Father ” (Ib. 38). And, needless to say, the claim is again made in our Lord’s last discourse with His disciples : “ He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father ” (ch. xiv. 9).

Turning now to the Synoptic Gospels, we notice that our Lord’s claim to a unique Divine Sonship is not recorded in them as having been made so frequently or so directly as in the Fourth Gospel ; but this is due to the fact that the scenes and circumstances in His life which they narrate were

different from those recorded in that Gospel. In them our Lord was dealing mainly with the simple peasantry of Galilee, instead of with the contentious Jews of Jerusalem. But it is quite a mistake to assert that the Synoptic Gospels represent our Lord's claim to Divine Sonship and Messiahship as having been first made at Cæsarea Philippi, when He sanctioned St. Peter's acknowledgment of Him as the Christ the Son of the living God (Matt. xvi; Mark viii; Luke ix).

It may be that the Apostles were slow to grasp the fact of His claim. They probably did not accompany Him in His intermediate visits to Jerusalem. And His enforcement of silence on the subject in Galilee, as contrasted with His outspoken assertion of it at Jerusalem, is easily accounted for. It was rejected at Jerusalem, and therefore could not possibly there lead to any untimely worldly results. But in Galilee it would have been otherwise. There the danger existed that it might be generally recognised; and its general recognition would inevitably have occasioned a popular rising in His favour, such as, in fact, very nearly occurred after the feeding of the five thousand (John vi. 15), and which, if it had taken place, would have been fatal to His predestined spiritual mission for the salvation of mankind.

But the Synoptic Gospels, no less than the Fourth Gospel, recognise our Lord's unique claim, as having been always implicitly if not expressly made

from the very beginning. St. Luke records an event in our Lord's life which occurred earlier by many years than anything mentioned in the Fourth Gospel. When He was twelve years old, and was taken to Jerusalem for the Passover, His utterance, "Wist ye not that I must be engaged in My Father's business [or house]?" (Luke ii. 49), showed that He was even then conscious of possessing a Divine Sonship. And all the Synoptists record what, we may note, St. John does not, that at His baptism a voice from Heaven was heard, saying, "Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17; Mark i. 11; Luke iii. 22).

St. Mark, who begins his treatise by describing his subject-matter as "the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God," records that, in the very first days of our Lord's Galilean ministry, a man with an unclean spirit addressed Him as the Holy One of God (Mark i. 24); or, as it is given in the Third Gospel, "Thou art the Son of God" (Luke iv. 41). If the Fourth Gospel states that while He was teaching in Jerusalem during the last week of His life there came, in response to an appeal from Him, a voice from Heaven which some who heard it attributed to thunder (ch. xii. 28, 29), it makes no mention of the Transfiguration, which, with the words of recognition which He then received from Heaven, is recorded by all the three Synoptists (Matt. xvii; Mark ix; Luke ix). Moreover, St. John does not mention the darkness which shrouded

our Lord's last hours on the Cross, nor the effect which His death had on the Centurion who was there on guard, and who was thereby convinced, according to the first two Gospels, that He was "Son of God" (Matt. xxvii. 54 ; Mark xv. 39).

No claim on the part of our Lord recorded in the Fourth Gospel is one whit stronger than that which is contained in the saying recorded in the First and Third of the Synoptic Gospels. "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father, and no one knoweth the Son save the Father ; neither doth any know the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him" (Matt. xi. 27 ; Luke x. 22). It will be generally admitted that this saying was taken by the two Evangelists from the lost document known as "Q," which may have been written either during our Lord's lifetime or, at any rate, shortly after its close.

Lastly, it is observable that in no one of the four Gospels do we find a single instance of our Lord associating Himself with His fellowmen in relation to God as their common Father. His language is always "My Father," "your Father," or "the Father." It is true that He taught them "When *ye* pray, say *Our* Father" ; but the Lord's Prayer, with its petition for forgiveness of trespasses, was one in which He never did, and never could, Himself join.

In fact we find in all the four Gospels alike,



without a single exception, the distinction invariably drawn which is so pointedly marked in the words recorded in the Fourth Gospel, as spoken by Him to Mary Magdalene on the morning of the Resurrection, "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God" (ch. xx. 17).

(5) *Our Lord's Severity towards His Opponents*

This is another characteristic of the discourses at Jerusalem. "There is one that accuseth you, even Moses" (ch. v. 45). "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you doeth the law?" (ch. vii. 19). "Ye shall die in your sins" (ch. viii. 21, 24). "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do" (Ib. 44). "If ye were blind, ye would have no sin; but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth" (ch. ix. 41).

These are strong utterances by One whom St. Matthew records as saying, "I am meek and lowly in heart" (ch. xi. 29). But they are even surpassed in severity by our Lord's denunciations against the Scribes and Pharisees during His last visit to Jerusalem, as recorded in the First Gospel, with the seven times repeated "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," "Woe unto you, ye blind guides" (Matt. xxiii.), and the scathing invective "Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of Gehenna?" (Ib. 33). The other two Synoptists do not record this severe language, but they give a brief summary of our



Lord's warning against the Scribes, ending with His declaration that they will receive greater condemnation (Mark xii. 38-40 ; Luke xx. 45-47). And the parable of the wicked husbandmen, with its application to the Scribes and Pharisees and the chief priests, as rejecting the heir of the Lord of the vineyard, is recorded in all the three Synoptic Gospels (Matt. xxi. 33-43 ; Mark xii. 1-9 ; Luke xx. 9-16).

#### 14. THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

##### Ch. xi

The account of the raising of Lazarus in the Fourth Gospel as contrasted with the complete silence of the other Evangelists on the incident, is regarded by critics as one of the greatest obstacles to their acceptance of the historicity of that Gospel. It is urged that if it really took place the other Evangelists would not have failed to record it. But several reasons may be suggested for their omission to do so, without our being driven to the conclusion that the incident never in fact occurred.

We must remember that though we regard it as far exceeding, in its stupendous character, any other of the miracles or signs attributed to our Lord in the Gospels, it would not have so struck the people among whom He lived. In each of the other Gospels an instance is given of the raising of the dead by our Lord (Matt. ix. 18, 23-26 ; Mark v.

35, 41 ; Luke viii. 32-35), while St. Luke mentions a second (Luke vii. 12-15) ; and in those Gospels the raising of the dead is regarded as on the same level with giving sight to the blind, and cleansing to lepers, the power of walking to the lame, and of hearing to the deaf (Matt. xi. 5 ; Luke vii. 22).

Again, it is well known that treatises in those days were strictly limited in size by material considerations ; and the fact that the First, Third, and Fourth Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles very nearly reached the possible limit of length, may account for their not containing matter which we might expect to have found in them. Moreover, the insertion of the account of the raising of Lazarus close to Jerusalem would have broken in upon the consecutive narrative of our Lord's ministry in Galilee and the surrounding country, until the last week of His life, which we find in each of the Synoptic Gospels. It is noticeable that when St. Luke introduces into his narrative the little episode in the house of Martha and Mary for the sake of the lesson contained in it, he merely mentions that their house was in a certain village, without stating the locality (Luke x. 38) ; so that, if we had not the Fourth Gospel to correct us, we should assume that it had been somewhere in Galilee. So careful does he seem to be not to break in upon his general narrative of what happened in Northern Palestine, by violently transferring his readers to the neighbourhood of Jerusalem.

But, above all, we may readily believe that as long as Lazarus lived, there would have been a desire on his own part, and on that of his family and friends, to keep the marvellous experience through which he had passed as quiet and as little talked about as possible. If at the present day one of our own friends had had the experience of a recovery from an extraordinary trance, which would make him, if it were generally known, an object of universal curiosity, and a marked man for life, we should expect that both he and his friends would desire to keep as silent about it as possible, and, above all, not to publish any written record of it during his lifetime. The conjecture that this may have been the case is strengthened (*a*) by the omission in the first two Gospels of the name of the woman who anointed our Lord at the supper at Bethany, although her act was to be spoken of throughout the world as a memorial of her (Matt. xxvi. 13 ; Mark xiv. 9), so that it is only from the Fourth Gospel that we know her to have been Mary, the sister of Lazarus ; and also, perhaps, (*b*) by St. Luke's omission to identify as his sisters the Martha and Mary whom he mentions in ch. x. 38-42, by merely speaking of their house as in a certain village, instead of specifically naming Bethany. At any rate we may assume that one or other of these considerations, or perhaps all of them combined, may have led to the omission of any mention of the miracle by the Synoptic Evangelists.

We may, therefore, put their silence out of the question in discussing the historicity of the incident, and regard it solely as it is presented to us in the Fourth Gospel. And, in so doing, we are struck by two features : first, the minute details of the narrative with the corroboration which they receive from other sources ; and, secondly, the fact that, as in the case of the healing of the impotent man, and the giving of sight to the man born blind, St. John apparently records the miracle not so much for its own sake, as to explain the twofold results of a diametrically opposite character which flowed from it.

As regards the narrative itself every impartial reader must be struck by its naïve simplicity, the lifelike touches which it gives of the characters of our Lord Himself and of the Apostle Thomas, and Martha and Mary, and of the circumstances attending the performance of the miracle. Either the narrative is a marvellous fictitious invention, worthy of the best novel-writer of any age, or else it is the record by an eye-witness of what he actually heard and saw. Though it is commonly supposed that this was the Apostle John, there is nothing in the narrative to preclude the alternative of his being a beloved Judæan disciple of priestly family ; but rather everything to suggest the likelihood of this alternative.

Our Lord, after the message from the sisters as to Lazarus being ill had reached Him, and while

He was still beyond Jordan, said, “*Our friend Lazarus is fallen asleep*” (ch. xi. 11). Obviously, therefore, some, at any rate, of the disciples who were then with Him had had a more or less intimate acquaintance with the family at Bethany. We have seen reasons to conclude that the twelve Apostles had not, as a body, accompanied our Lord on His previous visits to Jerusalem, though some of them might have done so ; and the younger son of Zebedee must have done so, if he was really the author of the Fourth Gospel. But, if the beloved disciple who wrote it was a citizen of Jerusalem, not of the Apostolic band, he would certainly have contracted a close friendship with the family at Bethany, who, like himself, were beloved by his Master, and would have come to them in the time of their affliction, to help and comfort them. It is, of course, a pure conjecture, but it is not an impossible conjecture, that he may have been the messenger who conveyed from them to our Lord the tidings of the illness of Lazarus. In that case we may suppose that he remained with our Lord and His disciples and came with them to Bethany ; so that he relates at first hand what passed between our Lord and His disciples in the interval (ch. xi. 4-16). But, at any rate, he would have been among the many Jews who, as the narrative states, came out from Jerusalem to mourn and sympathise with the sisters after their brother’s death, and would, therefore, have himself witnessed the working of



the miracle. It is clear from their having a tomb of their own, as well as from the fact of Mary being in possession of costly ointment, that the family were in well-to-do circumstances.

Coming now to the personal touches in the narrative, the first recorded is the remark of Thomas, who, when our Lord announced His intention of going to Bethany, said to the other disciples, " Let us also go that we may die with Him " (verse 16) We do not know whether all the other Apostles were with our Lord at this time ; but it is at any rate clear that, if they were, it was not a matter of course that all or any of them were expected to accompany our Lord on the journey. This confirms the presumption that in our Lord's visits to Jerusalem previous to the last one, He was not accompanied by the Apostles as a body. But the remark of Thomas is characteristic. It betrays an intense devotion to his Master, coupled with a gloomy foreboding of the penalty which he may have to pay for that devotion. It is in keeping with what is recorded of his attitude after our Lord's Resurrection. He refuses to believe in the fact of the Resurrection unless he can have visible and tangible proof of it, yet his disbelief does not lead him to abandon his adherence to the cause which he has adopted, even though he regards it as lost, or to forsake the company of his fellow-apostles.

We find similar distinct traits in the parts which Martha and Mary take in the incident, traits which



correspond with those delineated by St. Luke in his short account of one of our Lord's earlier visits to them. On that occasion Martha, who, as the elder sister, was the actual hostess, busied herself in preparing an entertainment worthy of her notable Guest, while Mary was content to sit at the feet of our Lord and listen to His teaching (Luke x. 38-42). In St. John's narrative we find Martha taking the foremost and active part. On hearing of our Lord's pending arrival, she goes forth to meet Him, while Mary remains in the house and does not stir till her sister conveys a distinct summons to her from the Master. Again, at the tomb, when He directs the stone which closed it to be removed, Martha puts in a remonstrance founded on what she supposes to be the condition of the corpse. It is somewhat remarkable that, notwithstanding the superiority of Martha both in age and in energy, the Evangelist twice assigns the prominence to Mary, first, when he speaks of Bethany as the village of Mary and Martha (verse 1), and afterwards when he speaks of the Jews who came to Mary and were divided in their views of the miracle (verse 45). For some reason, the younger sister seems to have occupied a larger place in his mind than the elder. She was clearly the more attractive and lovable of the two.

In the description of the bearing of our Lord Himself, the chief thing which we notice is His extraordinary emotion. In general, in performing

His mighty works, He is described in all the Gospels as majestically calm, though once, in administering a cure to a man who was deaf, and could not speak distinctly, we are told that He looked up to heaven and sighed (Mark vii. 34). But on this occasion, He was greatly moved. Weeping and mourning are, we know, contagious, and no wonder that, when all around were sobbing and wailing, He also shed tears. But the Evangelist records more than this, twice using a very strong Greek word, which in our Revised Version is rendered "groaned in the spirit," "groaning in Himself," or, in the margin, was "moved with indignation," and adding "was troubled" or "troubled Himself" (verses 33, 38). We are not told the reason for this deep emotion. We can only conjecture that He who came to abolish death (2 Tim. i. 10), the sting of which is sin (1 Cor. xv. 56), experienced no ordinary emotions when brought face to face, in the case of a family which was dear to Him, with the anguish caused by death and bereavement, before His own death and Resurrection had deprived these of their attendant terror and hopelessness.

St. John records the miracle itself in simple language, and then proceeds to mention its immediate result. The chief priests and Pharisees, on hearing of it, held a meeting of the Sanhedrin, at which it was definitely resolved that our Lord must be got rid of and put to death. There had previously been informal consultations on this subject

(chs. v. 16, 18, vii. 19, 25, 32), but now a final decision was come to. And the line of action in reference to it was determined. It was anticipated that His popularity, which they had no effectual means of checking, would increase, and would at last reach such a pitch that there would be an uprising of the people in His favour and an attempt, under His leadership, to throw off the Roman yoke, which could only lead to the destruction of their city and nation (ch. xi. 47-53). The Evangelist, through his connection with the high priest's family, obtained an account of what passed at the meeting of the Sanhedrin, even if he was not himself present at it; and we shall see that the line which they adopted explains the proceedings in connection with our Lord's arrest and trials and condemnation. But these were not yet to take place. Our Lord for a time left the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and remained in retirement.

### 15. THE CONCLUDING SCENES

We are not told what interval of time elapsed between the raising of Lazarus and our Lord's last journey to Jerusalem, when, as the Evangelist states, He came to Bethany six days before the Passover (ch. xii. 1). The Fourth Gospel now comes into line with the other three Gospels, confirming and supplementing their narratives in many respects, though differing somewhat in the details which it records, but never actually conflicting with them,

except possibly as to the exact dates of the Last Supper and the Crucifixion, and certainly as to the precise circumstances of St. Peter's denials of his Master, as to which circumstances the Synoptic Gospels do not quite agree among themselves. Where there is this actual conflict, we shall see reasons for concluding that the Fourth Gospel is more historically accurate than the others.

## 16. THE SUPPER AT BETHANY

### Ch. xii. 2-8

St. John, like the first two Evangelists, narrates the supper at Bethany, at which our Lord was anointed with the precious ointment. But whereas they mention it in connection with the contract to betray Him into which Judas entered two days before the Passover, without, however, stating the exact date of the supper (Matt. xxvi. 6-13; Mark xiv. 3-9), St. John distinctly states that it occurred six days before the Passover, on the eve of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. We cannot doubt that he is correct. After that entry, our Lord only returned once to Bethany, namely on the evening after it took place (Matt. xxi. 17; Mark xi. 11). He spent the other nights on the western slope of the Mount of Olives (Luke xxi. 37), at the spot, as we shall have reason to conclude, where He was ultimately betrayed (John xviii. 1, 2). And St. John supplies details about the supper which the two other Evangelists do not mention. He says

that Lazarus was present at it, and that Martha served, which corresponds with her character as given to us by St. Luke (ch. x. 40). But he also mentions that it was Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, who anointed our Lord with the ointment, thus making good our Lord's prediction, which the other Evangelists record, that her act would be made known throughout the world for a memorial of her. And he further states that it was Judas who was indignant at the waste of the ointment, and that his indignation was due to the fact that if the ointment had been sold, the price of it would in the first instance have been paid into the common fund of our Lord and the Apostles, of which he was the treasurer, and from which he was in the habit of purloining money and converting it to his own purposes. We see here how the narratives of St. John and the Synoptists supplement each other. The Synoptists give no hint as to how Judas was led to commit the act which has for ever branded his name with infamy. But they mention that he was to receive a sum of money for it (Matt. xxvi. 15 ; Mark xiv. 11 ; Luke xxii. 5) ; and the first two connect his betrayal with the supper at Bethany. St. John is silent as to his receiving money for his treachery, but mentions his indignation during that supper at losing a chance of gain to himself. Piecing, therefore, the narratives together, we infer, what we should not have learnt from the Synoptists apart from St. John, nor



from St. John apart from the Synoptists, that the final resolve of Judas to betray our Lord was prompted, or at any rate was strengthened, by a desire to recoup himself for the loss which he computed that he had sustained by the price of the ointment not having come into his hands.

## 17. THE ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

### Ch. xii. 12-19

The account in the Fourth Gospel of our Lord's entry into Jerusalem corresponds with the accounts of the same incident in the other Gospels. But St. John ascribes the enthusiasm of the people, in part at any rate, to His recent raising of Lazarus ; and St. Luke (ch. xix. 37) to some extent corroborates this in saying, that "the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works which they had seen."

St. John, like St. Matthew, notes the event as a fulfilment of the prophecy in the book of Zechariah ; but he agrees with the other Synoptists in stating that our Lord rode upon a young ass, and does not fall into the mistake of bringing two animals upon the scene, which St. Matthew makes (ch. xxi. 2-5), through a misreading of the prophecy, a misreading which is retained in our Authorised Version in its rendering "riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass," but which is corrected in our



Revised Version, where we read "riding upon an ass, *even* upon a colt, the foal of an ass" (Zech. ix. 9).

## 18. THE EVENTS OF THE WEEK

### Ch. xii. 20-50

St. John does not repeat the accounts which the other Gospels give us, of what passed between our Lord's entry into Jerusalem and the last supper. But he notices one incident which is omitted by them, the desire of certain Greek proselytes to see our Lord, and their application for the purpose to Philip, who, with his Greek name, which suggests his partially Greek connection and familiarity with the Greek language, was the natural member of the Apostolic band to be applied to by them on the subject.

The incident led to our Lord's repeating what He had often laid down before, and what is, in fact, the basic principle of Christian life and conduct—Life through death, Salvation through self-denial and self-sacrifice: "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (vers. 24, 25). We find our Lord's teaching on the subject recorded in six other passages in the Gospels: Matt. x. 39, xvi. 25; Mark viii. 35; Luke ix. 24, xiv. 26, xvii. 33.

And then St. John mentions some remarkable words of our Lord : " Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say ? Father, save Me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy Name." And when the assurance came, " I have both glorified it and will glorify it again," He added, " Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Myself " (vers. 27-32).

What was the meaning of His human soul being troubled on this particular occasion ? It would seem as if Satan took advantage of the evidence of His widespread fame and popularity, which was afforded by the eagerness of these Greeks to see Him, to suggest to Him to throw Himself upon this popularity, and obtain His kingdom without enduring sufferings and a cruel death. This had been the original temptation in the wilderness. It was renewed when the people were prepared to make Him king, after the feeding of the five thousand (John vi. 15) ; it came to Him again from the mouth of St. Peter at Cæsarea Philippi (Matt. xvi. 22, 23) ; and it was to assail Him finally in the Garden of Gethsemane, when He cried in His agony, " Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me " (Matt. xxvi. 39 ; Mark xiv. 36 ; Luke xxii. 42). We know not on how many other occasions He had to wrestle with it ; but this certainly appears to have been one of them, and as

His concluding words (verses 31, 32) indicate, it was the last before the final agony at Gethsemane.

### 19. THE LAST SUPPER

Chs. xiii.—xvii

We come now to the Last Supper ; and it is in connection with this, that the greatest difficulty exists in harmonising St. John's narrative with those of the other Evangelists.

They clearly represent it as the paschal meal. St. Matthew says, that on the first day of unleavened bread, the disciples asked our Lord where they should make ready for Him to eat the Passover, and He sent them to a householder with the message, "The Master saith, I will keep the Passover at thy house with My disciples." They accordingly prepared the Passover there, and when evening was come they sat down to the meal (Matt. xxvi. 17-20).

The narratives of the other Synoptists as to what happened are to the same effect, but they make it still more definite by saying that it occurred on the first day of unleavened bread, "when they sacrificed the Passover" (Mark xiv. 12-17 ; Luke xxii. 7-14) ; and St. Luke adds that, at the commencement of the meal, our Lord said to His disciples, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer" (Ib. 15). And he mentions the passing round of two cups of wine, while the other Synoptists mention the singing of a concluding

hymn ; all three of which ceremonies formed part of the regular ritual of the paschal feast.

There can be no serious doubt that the supper mentioned by St. John in ch. xiii is identical with the paschal meal narrated in the Synoptic Gospels. Our Lord signifies at it the traitor Judas, and goes forth from it to His betrayal and arrest, just as is recorded in the other Gospels with respect to the meal of which they give an account. But then it is pointed out that there are statements in his Gospel which indicate that he cannot have regarded it as a paschal meal. Ch. xiii opens with the words, *πρὸ δὲ τῆς ἑορτῆς τοῦ πάσχα* (which we translate, Now before the feast of the passover) "Jesus, knowing that His hour was come that He should depart out of the world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end. And during supper," etc. And we are told that when Judas rose from the table and went out, some of the Apostles thought that he was doing so in order to buy things which they required for the feast, or to give alms to the poor (ch. xiii. 29) ; and that on the following morning our Lord's accusers would not go into Pilate's judgment hall, that they might not be defiled but might eat the passover (ch. xviii. 28). Again, St. John says that the following day, the day of the Crucifixion, was the Preparation of the Passover (ch. xix. 14, 31).

The historical point here at issue is, in short,

this : Was our Lord crucified on the 14th day of the month Nisan, the day on which the paschal lambs were sacrificed and eaten (Lev. xxiii. 5), or on the 15th, which was the first of the seven days of unleavened bread, and was to be a day of holy convocation and of abstinence from servile work (Ib. 6, 7) ?

If we possessed only the Synoptic Gospels we should have no doubt that the Crucifixion took place on the 15th of Nisan, the Last Supper having been eaten on the evening of the 14th. St. Mark, and St. Luke, when they speak of its taking place on the first day of unleavened bread but add that it was the day on which the passover was sacrificed, show that they meant not the 15th day of the month (which, according to Lev. xxiii. 6, was to be the first of seven days of unleavened bread), but the 14th, when unleavened bread was eaten at the paschal meal. No one suggests that the Crucifixion took place on the 16th day of the month. But if we had only the Fourth Gospel, it would seem equally clear, that the Crucifixion took place on the 14th of Nisan. Which is the correct date ? and how, if at all, can the divergence between the Evangelists be reconciled ?

There has been a vast difference of opinion between authorities and commentators on these points. On the one hand, it is maintained that the testimony of the Synoptists as to the supper being the paschal meal is conclusive, and that our



Lord must have partaken of it on the right day, the 14th of Nisan. The upholders of this view do not dispute the historical accuracy of the Fourth Gospel, except so far as declining to connect the words in ch. xiii. 1, "before the feast of the passover," with the supper which is abruptly mentioned in verse 2. They explain the words about Judas going out to buy requisites for the feast as referring to the buying of what was needful for the festival of the seven days of unleavened bread which followed the 14th of Nisan; and they explain the statement about our Lord's accusers keeping out of Pilate's judgment hall, that they might eat the passover, as referring to eating the festal food on those seven days, or else as implying that in their desperate eagerness to arrest our Lord and procure His death, they had omitted to eat the passover meal on the proper day, and were going to do so on the following evening. According to this view the 15th of Nisan was the date of the Crucifixion.

But the weight of testimony from other sources and the preponderance of both Christian and Jewish commentators is in favour of the 14th of Nisan being the day of our Lord's suffering on the Cross, even as He is recognised by the Church to be "the very Paschal Lamb which was offered for us and hath taken away the sin of the world," according to St. Paul's declaration, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. v. 7).

Justin Martyr, in the second century, addressing



Jews, says, "On the day of the Passover ye took Him, and on the day of the Passover ye crucified Him." Irenæus, in the same century, says that Moses foretold the Passion of our Lord under the name of the Passover, and on the very day which was predicted long before by Moses, the Lord suffered, fulfilling the Passover.

And Clement of Alexandria, a little later, says distinctly: "The Lord did not eat His last supper on the legal day of the Passover, but on the previous day, the thirteenth of the month, and suffered on the day following, being Himself the Passover." To the same effect is Hippolytus of Portus, not long afterwards: "At the season at which Christ suffered, He did not eat the legal Passover, for He was Himself the Passover, which had been foretold, and which was accomplished at the appointed day."

The same view gave rise to the practice of the Quartodecimans of Asia which, as mentioned above (p. 12), was championed by Polycrates, who declared that it had the support of the author of the Fourth Gospel himself.

And Apollinaris, Bishop of Hierapolis, towards the end of the second century, is explicit in upholding the date indicated in that Gospel, as against the date suggested by the Synoptic narratives. He says: "There are some persons who through ignorance raise contentions about these things, having fallen into a pardonable error. . . . They say that on the 14th the Lord ate the lamb with

His disciples, and Himself suffered on the great day of unleavened bread; and they interpret Matthew as saying this according to their apprehension; whence it appears that their action is at variance with the law; and the Gospels seem to them to be at variance." And again: "The 14th is the true Passover of the Lord, the great Sacrifice, the Son of God Who was bound in the place of the lamb, . . . Who was pierced in His holy side, Who poured out from His side the two purifying streams, water and blood, word and spirit, and Who was buried on the day of the Passover, the stone being placed on His sepulchre." And the fact that St. John applied to our Lord the direction respecting the paschal lamb, "A bone of him shall not be broken" (Exod. xii. 46; John xix. 36), indicates that he regarded our Lord as the true Paschal Sacrifice.

We shall do well to accept the historicity of the Fourth Gospel, as regards the date of the Crucifixion being the 14th of Nisan. But how then is it possible to reconcile it with the other Gospels, which in that case represent our Lord and His disciples as eating the Passover on the 13th of Nisan? There is no absolutely satisfactory way of accomplishing this, but some suggestions may be made by way of helping towards it.

In the first place, we may notice the undoubted points of agreement between the four Evangelists. All the Synoptists state that the Crucifixion took

place on the Preparation day (*ἡ παρασκευή*, Matt. xxvii. 62 ;] Mark xv. 42 ; Luke xxiii. 54), which, as St. Mark tells us, was the eve of the Sabbath (*προσάββατον*), and St. John makes the same statement in ch. xix. 31. He had previously, in verse 14, stated that the day was the preparation of the Passover, by which he meant, not the day of preparation *for* the Passover, but the preparation day or Sabbath-eve occurring during the passover season, a special Sabbath eve, just as the passover Sabbath, the Sabbath occurring during the passover season, was a special or high Sabbath, in that year particularly so, since, according to St. John's chronology, it coincided with the 15th of Nisan, the day of holy convocation, the first of the seven days of unleavened bread (*ἦν γὰρ μεγάλη ἡ ἡμέρα ἐκείνου τοῦ σαββάτου*). The four Evangelists are therefore at one as regards the days of the week.

Again, St. John agrees with the Synoptists in stating that our Lord had an evening meal with His Apostles, and that during that meal He indicated Judas Iscariot as the one who should betray Him, and that during it or afterwards He predicted that His disciples would desert Him and that Peter would deny Him ; and that He went forth from the meal to His doom. And the words which St. Luke records as spoken at the supper, "Who is the greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth ? Is not he that sitteth at meat ? But I am amongst you as He that serveth," clearly refer to the foot-

washing by our Lord, recorded in the Fourth Gospel.

But there remains the grave apparent discrepancy of the Synoptists representing the supper as the passover feast while St. John not only gives no hint of this being the case, but actually seems to negative it. For he says, "Now before the feast of the passover (*πρὸ δὲ τῆς ἑορτῆς τοῦ πάσχα*) Jesus, knowing that His hour was come that He should depart out of the world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, loved them unto the end. And during supper," etc. (ch. xiii. 1, 2). If this statement is to be taken as it stands in our English versions, it seems flatly to contradict the Synoptic representation of the supper as a paschal meal. For the opening words can hardly, as some have suggested, be confined to the statement of our Lord's continuing love for His disciples.

At the same time the way in which the mention of the supper is abruptly introduced, seems to imply that the readers of the Gospel were expected to have a previous general knowledge of it, which they could only have derived from the Synoptic Gospels, or some source containing the same information. Does, then, the language of St. John absolutely preclude the idea of his having regarded the supper which he mentions as a pass-over meal? The answer to this question partly depends on the exact meaning to be attached to

the opening words of ch. xiii, which we translate, "Now before the feast of the Passover."

In ch. xii. 1, we find the peculiar expression *πρὸ ἑξ ἡμερῶν τοῦ πάσχα*, meaning, no doubt, "six days before the Passover." But here we have *πρὸ τῆς ἑορτῆς τοῦ πάσχα*. St. John is so precise in mentioning days and even hours, that if he was here intending to narrate something which happened before the Passover, we should, on the analogy of ch. xii. 1, have expected him to have written *πρὸ μίας ἡμέρας* (or *δὺν ἡμέρων*, as the case might be) *τοῦ πάσχα*; "one day (or two days) before the Passover." But he has not done so; and it is, at least, legitimate for us to conjecture that he meant, by the words which he actually used, to say, "And now to come to the feast of the Passover itself," etc. This gives far more point to the words, which are otherwise vague; and if no exact Greek parallel can be adduced for such a use of *πρό* in respect of *time*, as meaning close up to the event mentioned, there are abundant instances, in classical as well as in later Greek, of its use in respect of *place* as meaning close up to the object indicated. For instance, in Acts xii. 6, *πρὸ τῆς θύρας* means, immediately in front of the door; in fact it might be construed "at the door."

If we accept this view, the Fourth Gospel is relieved from the appearance of contradicting the other Gospels on the nature of the Last Supper. But there remains the difficulty of explaining how



it happened that our Lord fixed the paschal meal for the 13th, instead of the 14th of Nisan, thereby anticipating the legal time for it by twenty-four hours.

The observance by the Jews, regular or irregular, of the Passover, and the succeeding festival days of unleavened bread, has varied from age to age, and we have no means of pronouncing decisively as to the practice respecting it in our Lord's time. But we seem to be reduced to one of two hypotheses. Either there was at that time a recognised custom among, at any rate, some of the Jews, to eat the Passover on the evening of the 13th day, which would, of course, according to Jewish computation, be the beginning of the 14th day, instead of at the close of the 14th day; or else our Lord, knowing, to use St. John's words, that the hour for His departure from the world was come, designedly anticipated the proper time for the meal by twenty-four hours, a proceeding to which, in that case, we must suppose that it was lawful to resort, in cases of emergency. But, of course, this latter hypothesis is hardly consistent with the statement in the Second and Third Gospels, that the meal was prepared on the day when the paschal lambs were sacrificed.

We have still to account for the omission by the Synoptists of all reference to our Lord's after-supper discourse, which is so fully set forth by St. John (except that made by St. Luke, in Acts i. 4,



to the words of our Lord recorded in John xiv. 16), and for the omission by St. John of all reference to the institution of the Lord's Supper. St. Mark's Gospel does not contain much of our Lord's teaching, and the omission in it of any allusion to the discourse need, therefore, occasion no surprise. And the fact that the discourse was probably not included in the "Q" document, will account for our not finding it in the two other Synoptic Gospels. Moreover, as has been already observed in connection with their omitting the account of the raising of Lazarus, it is probable that each of these had, with its contents as they now stand, nearly reached the length to which a book was limited at the time when they were written, so that any considerable addition to them would have been impossible.

And the absence of any reference by St. John to the institution of the Lord's Supper may, perhaps, be due to the same restriction as to length, but may more probably be explained in the same way as his omission of other facts narrated by the Synoptists, namely, that those for whom he was writing were already well acquainted with it.

## 20. THE ARREST OF OUR LORD

### Ch. xviii. 1-12

The Fourth Gospel contains graphic details respecting the arrest of our Lord, some of which

throw additional light on points incidentally mentioned in the other Gospels.

And first, as to the spot where it occurred. Those Gospels all state that He went with His disciples to the Mount of Olives, St. Luke adding, "as His custom was." St. Matthew and St. Mark describe the spot to which they came as an enclosed place (*χωρίου*) called Gethsemane. St. Luke merely says that they came to "the place" (*ἐπὶ τοῦ τόπου*). But St. John states that our Lord went forth with His disciples over the mountain torrent Kedron, where was a garden (*κῆπος*), into which they entered; and the traitor Judas knew the place (*τὸν τόπον*), because our Lord and His disciples often resorted thither.

The narrative in the Fourth Gospel points to a spot which might be described either as in the valley of Kedron (or Jehoshaphat) or as on the lower part of the western slope of the Mount of Olives, which apparently abounded in gardens. For in Neh. viii. 15, 16 we read that the Jews fetched from it branches of olives, pines, myrtles, palms, and other trees to make booths for keeping the feast of Tabernacles. And Josephus testifies to their existence there in our Lord's time. Speaking of the way in which the Roman Army under Titus which besieged Jerusalem in A.D. 70, had laid waste the surrounding country, he says, "Truly the very view itself of the country was a melancholy thing; for those places which were before

adorned with trees and pleasant gardens were now become a desolate country every way, and the trees were all cut down ; nor could any foreigner that had formerly seen Judæa and the most beautiful suburbs of the city, and now saw it as a desert, but lament and mourn sadly at so great a change ” (*Wars of the Jews*, vi. 1 (1)). This may have applied to other environs of Jerusalem as well, but it certainly applied to the valley of Kedron and the Mount of Olives, for he tells us that the Roman legions had orders to encamp at the distance of six furlongs from Jerusalem at the Mount of Olives (Ib. v. 2 (3)). And in describing the wall with which Titus encompassed the city, he says that it extended along the valley of Kedron to the Mount of Olives (Ib. v. 12 (2)). The mention of suburbs renders it probable that many of these gardens had villas or summer-houses in them. Two circumstances suggest that this was the case with the garden of Gethsemane. It seems to have been the nocturnal resting-place of our Lord and the Apostles, during the week of His Passion, after the first night which it is expressly said that He spent at Bethany.

With respect to the other nights St. Matthew says nothing, and St. Mark merely says that on that first evening He went forth out of the city (Mark xi. 19). But St. Luke says that every night He went out and lodged in the Mount of Olives (Luke xxi. 37), and states that on the night

of His arrest He went there as His custom was (Ib. xxii. 39). This statement, agreeing with that in the Fourth Gospel as to our Lord and disciples being in the habit of resorting thither, clearly shows that they spent all those last nights in the garden of Gethsemane ; and we can hardly conceive that they did so without a roof to cover them.

Again, in St. Mark's Gospel (ch. xiv. 51, 52) we have the remarkable mention of the young man with a linen cloth cast about him over his naked body, whom the arresters of our Lord laid hold of, while they let all the disciples go untouched, and who left the linen cloth in their hands and fled naked. How came he to be there in that unclothed state ? St. Mark gives us no hint ; but if we suppose that he was either the person, or a member of the family, to whom the garden belonged, and was sleeping on that night in the villa or summer-house which stood in it, the whole incident is explained. He was roused from sleep by the tumult, and came out either in his night apparel, or in a piece of clothing hastily picked up, to ascertain the cause of the disturbance, and would naturally inquire what had led to the invasion of his garden. We can almost hear him say, " What business have you coming at this time of night into my garden ? " And the lawless men to whom he addressed the question would, of course, reply by endeavouring to seize him. We cannot doubt that this is the true explanation of the incident ; and the clue to

it is furnished by the statement in the Fourth Gospel, that the place of our Lord's arrest was a garden. It has been suggested that the young man was the Evangelist St. Mark himself, whose mother, we know, had a house of some importance in Jerusalem (Acts xii. 12), to which Gethsemane may well have been attached as a suburban resort. Whether this be so or not, it would have been natural at the passover time, when the city was full of visitors, that some of the citizens, to make room for the entertainment of guests in their own houses, should have spent the nights in their suburban quarters.

The next detail furnished by the Fourth Gospel, is as to the body of men which Judas brought with him to arrest our Lord. St. Luke merely mentions it as a multitude (ὄχλος); St. Matthew and St. Mark describe it as a multitude with swords and staves. But St. John tells us the composition of the multitude. It was not collected at haphazard. He says that Judas received the cohort, and from the chief priests and Pharisees constables, and that they came with lanterns and torches and arms; and that the cohort with their commander, the tribune or chiliarch, and the Jewish constables took and bound our Lord (ch. xviii. 3, 12). The constables were the temple police, the same who on a previous occasion had been sent by the Pharisees to arrest our Lord but had failed to do so (ch. vii. 32, 45, 46). But there were added to them the cohort of Roman



soldiers who were stationed at Jerusalem, commanded by their tribune.

These details explain two points in the narratives of the Synoptists, which might otherwise be difficult to understand. They say that the men who accompanied Judas were armed with swords and staves. It is doubtful whether at that time a body of Jews would have been permitted by the Romans to be armed with swords. But, at any rate, we learn from the Fourth Gospel that the swords were carried by Roman soldiers, and the staves or batons by the temple constables.

Then, again, while the high priest and the Sanhedrin were, of course, expecting the capture of our Lord, and were waiting to try Him, it would not be clear, if we had only the story as told in the Synoptic Gospels, how it was that Pilate was ready to try Him at the early hour when He was brought into the *prætorium*, or how it was that when He was brought there, Pilate should immediately have asked Him, "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" But the Fourth Gospel furnishes the needed explanation. The aid of the Roman cohort could not have been obtained without Pilate's consent, and to get that consent it must have been necessary to represent to him that a dangerous conspiracy was on foot, that there was a plot to set up a Jewish monarch and raise an armed revolt against the Roman power, and that it was important to send an armed force to arrest the man who was to



be proclaimed king. When the arrest had been made, the tribune, no doubt, at once informed Pilate of the fact, so that he was ready to deal with the case as soon as the pretender to the Jewish throne should be brought before him.

The Fourth Gospel supplies further graphic details respecting our Lord's arrest. On the arrival of those who came to effect it He went forth, not, it would seem, out of the garden, but out of the collected band of His disciples, and asked them, "Whom seek ye?" and on their saying that it was Jesus of Nazareth, replied, "I am He." Thereupon, we are told, they went backward and fell to the ground. We need not assume anything miraculous in this incident. Probably the Jewish contingent, a not well-disciplined body, were in the forefront. They expected to meet either with resistance, or with an attempt at flight. When, instead, they were confronted with a solitary figure, standing calmly and majestically in the moonlight, it is not surprising that the foremost among them should for the moment have recoiled and in doing so have fallen themselves, or knocked down those immediately behind them.

The Synoptists mention the cutting of the ear of the high priest's slave by one of our Lord's disciples. But St. John tells us that the blow was struck by St. Peter, and that the slave's name was Malchus, which means "king." It was probably a nickname given to him as being the high priest's

favourite or confidential slave. All the Evangelists call him *the* slave, which implies that he was the chief member of the high priest's household who was present at the arrest; and he had probably been specially sent by his master to bring back an exact report of what took place. This would account for his being in a foremost position. The blow was, no doubt, delivered during a kind of scrimmage, and perhaps no one but St. John actually saw who had struck it. At any rate St. Peter was not identified in the high priest's palace as having done so. But his own knowledge of it would add to his anxiety not to be recognised in the palace as one of our Lord's party; though, of course, he did not himself know, what St. John tells us was the case, that one of his interrogators, who caused him to deny it, was actually a kinsman of the wounded Malchus.

## 21. ST. PETER'S DENIALS

Ch. xviii. 15-18, 25-27

The thrice-repeated denials of St. Peter are recorded by all the four Evangelists, but they do not agree with each other in the details of the narrative, and there are strong reasons for concluding that St. John's account is the most accurate of the four.

According to all the Synoptists these denials took place on or after St. Peter's admission into the

high priest's palace. St. Matthew and St. Mark say, that the second occurred after he had gone out into the vestibule, and the third a short time afterwards. According to St. Luke, the first two denials occurred within a short time of one another, and the third about an hour afterwards, certainly within the palace, for he adds that upon its taking place the Lord turned and looked on Peter. Both St. Matthew and St. Mark state that the first two denials were spoken to a maid ; the second, according to St. Matthew, being spoken to a different maid, but according to St. Mark, to the same maid. Both, however, agree that the third was made to a group of bystanders. On the other hand, St. Luke states that the first denial was spoken to a maid, the second to a man, and the third to another man.

All three Synoptists agree that St. Peter gave two if not all three denials in reply to a question or remark that he *also* had been with Jesus, or was one of His disciples. In none of them do we find either (*a*) a hint what this "also" refers to, though, of course, it implies that there was at the time at least one other man in the palace who was known to be a disciple of the Lord, or (*b*) any indication why, such being the case, St. Peter should have been so desperately afraid to own his own discipleship. But St. John explains both these points. He was himself present in the palace as an acknowledged disciple of the Lord, and St. Peter's practical

danger lay in the fact that it was he who had cut the ear of the high priest's confidential slave.

For this reason, and also because the accounts of the denials in the Synoptists are not, in detail, consistent with one another, we are entitled to claim the account of them given by St. John as the most accurate. He tells us that the first occurred when he asked the maid who kept the door to let in St. Peter. It appears that at that time it was usual for the doorkeeper to be a woman. Such was Rhoda in the house of Mark's mother (Acts xii. 13). And Josephus in relating the murder of Ishbosheth, son of Saul, says that it occurred when none of his guards were there, and when the woman who kept the door was not watching (*Antiq. Jud.* vii. 2 (1)). What more natural than that when the portress was asked by a known disciple of the Lord to let in St. Peter, she should say, "Art thou *also* one of this man's disciples?"

St. John does not, like the Synoptists, bring upon the scene any maid except in the position of doorkeeper, and it is not likely that there were any others present. Instead of giving, like St. Luke, the interval of an hour between the second and third denials, he intimates that both of these last two denials took place after the first informal inquiry of our Lord was over. His narrative suggests that possibly they were caused by a look of recognition passing between our Lord and the Apostle, as our Lord was being led from the

quarters of Annas to those of Caiaphas, across the courtyard where St. Peter was warming himself by the fire (vers. 24, 25) ; and considering the slight inaccuracies which clearly exist in the narratives of the Synoptists, it is permissible to conjecture that the look which St. Luke says that our Lord turned upon St. Peter after the third denial, was really that look which gave rise to his being questioned for the second and third time about his discipleship. Considering the act which he had committed when our Lord was arrested, the form of the last of these questions, " Did I not see thee in the garden with Him ? " was of itself sufficient to fill him with abject terror, without his knowing that it was actually put to him by a kinsman of the wounded Malchus.

## 22. OUR LORD'S TRIALS AND CRUCIFIXION

Chs. xviii. 13, 14, 19-40 ; xix

When we come to our Lord's trials and Crucifixion, we find that St. John appears designedly to pass over circumstances narrated by the Synoptists, and to record others which they have omitted.

In order to harmonise his account of the proceedings which followed on our Lord's arrest with the accounts in the Synoptic Gospels, we must realise that at this time, although Caiaphas was the actual high priest, the patriarch of the high-priestly family was Annas, who had himself been



high priest, and had been succeeded first by his son and then by his son-in-law Caiaphas, and was succeeded afterwards by others of his sons. Probably, the whole family lived in one large house or palace, the quarters of Annas being separated from those of Caiaphas by a courtyard. All the four Gospels agree that our Lord was taken to this palace. He was here subjected to three distinct examinations or trials: the first, an informal preliminary inquiry before Annas, mentioned by St. John alone (ch. xviii. 19-23); the second before Caiaphas, recorded by St. Matthew (ch. xxvi. 59-68), and St. Mark (ch. xiv. 55-65), and only incidentally referred to by St. Luke (ch. xxii. 63-65), and St. John (ch. xviii. 24); and the third the trial before the Sanhedrin, alluded to by St. Matthew (ch. xxvii. 1) and St. Mark (ch. xv. 1), but recorded more at length by St. Luke (ch. xxii. 66-71).

St. John, as an eye-witness, was able to narrate what happened at the informal inquiry, while for their accounts of the subsequent proceedings the Synoptists had to rely on public records, which contained no report of that inquiry.

In St. John's account of this inquiry, he tells us that the high priest asked Jesus about His disciples, and about His teaching. It seems that Caiaphas came in to be present at the inquiry, and from his position naturally took a leading part in it, though it was actually presided over by Annas, and he was anxious to obtain information about



our Lord's disciples in order to implicate them. But our Lord said not a word about them ; and as to His teaching, He referred His interrogator to the constables or officers who stood by, and who had heard it, having on one occasion been specially sent to arrest our Lord while He was teaching, as recorded in ch. vii. 32, 45, 46.

On the conclusion of the inquiry Annas sent our Lord over to the quarters or hall of Caiaphas (ver. 24). The insertion of the pluperfect "had sent" in our Authorised Version, which is clearly wrong, was caused by the mistaken notion that the preceding inquiry had taken place before Caiaphas, instead of before Annas, and it is corrected in the Revised Version.

But St. John, without alluding to the trials before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, which had been sufficiently recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, goes on at once to the proceedings before Pilate. And in narrating them he supplements the accounts given by the Synoptics, especially in two particulars, as to which the historicity of his Gospel has been strongly impugned by critics. The Gospel states that the accusers of our Lord would not enter the *prætorium* as it would have defiled them before eating the Passover, but that Pilate twice withdrew into it, and summoned our Lord before him, and we are told what passed between them there. It is urged that these conversations therefore took place in private, and the Evangelist could not have known

what was said in the course of them. But Roman trials always took place in public, and although our Lord's accusers would not enter the building, there was no reason why others, including the Evangelist, should not have done so. The historicity of the two accounts must be judged by whether the reports of the conversations bear the semblance of truth, and, in deciding this, we must not regard them as containing the whole of the very words and sentences which were spoken, but only as giving a condensed summary of what was actually said.

In the report of the first interview (ch. xviii. 33-38), as it stands, it is difficult to see the connection in our Lord's final words, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice." No doubt He had previously said that His kingdom was not of this world, but how does the idea of "the truth" come in? On the assumption that the whole of the dialogue is not recorded, it may perhaps be explained in this way:

Pilate had probably heard of certain Stoic philosophers at Rome, who declared that a wise man, whatever might be his station of life, was, by virtue of his knowledge, a king—a tenet ridiculed by Horace in the well-known passage at the end of Sat. i. 3. If so, what is more likely than that when

he found a mean prisoner claiming to be a king, but not in an earthly sense, he should have said, "Oh! then, you are, I suppose, one of those people who declare they are kings, because they are possessed of wisdom and knowledge." To this remark, our Lord's words, "I am come to bear witness unto the truth," would be a natural reply.

In the second interview, recorded in ch. xix. 9-11, we notice that our Lord, who on the first occasion had answered Pilate's question as to whether He was a king, refuses to answer the more searching but indefinite question, "Whence art Thou?" When, however, Pilate claims to have power or authority to release or crucify Him, He declares that this power or authority belongs to Pilate, not as an individual, but as providentially placed in the position in which it could be either rightly or mistakenly exercised; the contrary, however, was the case with Caiaphas, the head of the Jewish nation, who was individually responsible for having wrongfully delivered Him up to Pilate.

The fact of these two interviews having taken place is briefly recorded in the first two Gospels (Matt. xxvii. 11, 13, 14; Mark xv. 2, 4, 5).

In his account of the rest of the events of the day, St. John supplements the Synoptic narratives by recording with apparent historical accuracy, as an eye-witness, incidents which they omit. Clearly, either on being charged with the care of our Lord's mother, he at once took her to his home, and then

returned to the Cross for the final scenes, or else they both stayed there till the end.

### 23. THE POST-RESURRECTION INCIDENTS

#### Chs. xx, xxi

The details of the post-resurrection Gospel narratives can never be precisely harmonised in all their minute particulars ; but the Fourth Gospel throws some important light upon them. If we possessed only the three other Gospels, they would be very difficult to reconcile with one another.

St. Matthew and St. Mark state that the women who had come to the tomb on the Resurrection morning were bidden by the angel to tell the disciples that our Lord would go before them into Galilee, and they would see Him there. We learn nothing more from St. Mark, for his narrative ends abruptly at ch. xvi. 8, the concluding verses in his Gospel, as we have it, being a short summary by a later hand. But St. Matthew adds that our Lord Himself appeared to the women on their way to deliver the message to the disciples, and repeated it in identical terms, and that the disciples accordingly went to Galilee, and saw Him there.

St. Luke, on the other hand, makes no mention of any such message, and records appearances of our Lord, on the day of His Resurrection, to two disciples on the way to Emmaus, and to St. Peter alone and to the company of the disciples in the

evening, but appears to know nothing of any appearance in Galilee, and gives no hint either in his Gospel or in the Acts that the Apostles ever returned there after our Lord's death and Resurrection.

These two apparently conflicting accounts may be reconciled in the following way: The women who received the message at the tomb went away, according to St. Matthew, with fear and great joy—two scarcely compatible sentiments. St. Mark's narrative, however, breaks off with the statement that "they fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had come upon them, and they said nothing to any man, for they were afraid. . . ." The ending of the sentence in the original Greek shows that it went on or was intended to go on with a statement as to what they were afraid of; and we may safely assume that it was that they were perhaps under a delusion themselves in what they fancied they had seen and heard, and that at any rate anyone to whom they repeated it would regard it as a delusion. As, therefore, they were not in a frame of mind to convey to the disciples the message of the angel, our Lord Himself met them, and changed their fear into the joy of which St. Matthew speaks. But St. Luke tells us, that when they came to the disciples, their report was received with incredulity, and as idle talk. He adds, that St. Peter went to the tomb and verified the statement of the women as to its being empty, but returned unconvinced of our Lord's



Resurrection, and simply amazed at what had happened. The Fourth Gospel informs us, that its author accompanied St. Peter, and that on inspecting the tomb and its contents, which are minutely described, they believed the report which had been brought as to the condition of the tomb, but not the fact of the Resurrection, "for," it is added, "as yet they knew not the Scripture that He must rise again from the dead." Clearly, then, if nothing more had happened, the disciples would never have gone to Galilee, as a body, to meet the risen Lord, though they might have returned there as scattered individuals each to his own native place. Therefore, just as our Lord's personal appearance to the women when returning from the tomb, was necessary to ensure their faithful delivery of the summons to Galilee, so His personal appearance to the disciples in Jerusalem was necessary to ensure faithful obedience to the summons.

The Fourth Gospel both corroborates St. Luke's account of His memorable appearance to them at Jerusalem on that first Easter evening, and also confirms St. Matthew's statement as to their journey into Galilee, and their meeting with Him there. From a cursory reading of the Gospel we should conclude that the appearance recorded in it, by which the faith of St. Thomas was confirmed, took place, like the earlier one, at Jerusalem. But it may have occurred while the disciples were on their way to Galilee.



We must, of course, assume that the scene by the lake, narrated in the last chapter of the Gospel, took place before the appearance on the mountain recorded at the close of St. Matthew's Gospel, and also, if this was on a different occasion, before the appearance to the five hundred brethren mentioned by St. Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 6. Although this last chapter may possibly not have quite the same historical authority as the rest of the book, it may at least be taken as corroborating the First Gospel, and the hint in the Second Gospel, with regard to our Risen Lord meeting His disciples in Galilee. And it records the thrice-repeated public restoration of St. Peter to the apostolate, which he might have been supposed to have forfeited by his thrice-repeated denial of his Master. In 1 Pet. v. 1, 2, the Apostle transmitted to his fellow-presbyters the commission which he then received, to shepherd the flock of Christ.

Thus, the Fourth Gospel has historical value in supporting, by its independent testimony, both the First Gospel, with, so far as it goes, the Second Gospel, and also the Third Gospel, in their different accounts of the localities in which our Lord's post-resurrection appearances took place.

## CHAPTER VI

### TESTIMONY TO CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT

A word must be added respecting the historical value of the Fourth Gospel, as an evidence of the general state of theological thought in the Church at the close of the first century, when it was first put forth.

This is a matter quite independent of the question whether or not it contains an accurate account of the sayings and doings of our Lord which it professes to record.

There can be no doubt that it was at once received by the Church as a genuine and authentic document, that its historical accuracy was never questioned in those early times, and that ultimately it was unhesitatingly incorporated into the Canon of the New Testament.

Let us consider what this means. It means that the doctrine of the absolute Divinity of our Lord was not a theory gradually evolved during the second or third or fourth century of our era, but was held at the close of the first century to the full extent to which we find it stated and illustrated in this Gospel. On no other hypothesis can we

account for the universal acceptance of the Gospel at the time when it was first given to the Church.

Its historical value, as a testimony to the theological ideas which were then current, cannot be impugned.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

WE have now applied the requisite tests for ascertaining the historicity of the narrative contained in the Fourth Gospel. We have seen that its author was undoubtedly a contemporary of the incidents which he relates, and an eye-witness of many and probably most of them; and that he shows himself fully competent to have entered into the significance of the events and discourses which he records.

We have seen that it was his evident intention to give a truthful account of them, and that, although the Gospel, as we have it, was not put forth till some seventy years after they occurred, it is quite possible, and some indications render it highly probable, that he made written notes of them many years before, perhaps soon after they actually happened.

We have seen, too, that his narrative and the picture which he presents of our Lord are, upon the whole, consistent with those which we find in the Synoptic Gospels, and in some important particulars illustrate and supplement the contents

of those Gospels. In the points in which there is an apparent divergence from those Gospels—the dates of the Last Supper and of the Crucifixion, and the details of St. Peter's threefold denial of his Master—we have noted that preference is to be given to the statements of St. John.

And when we find that this is the case with respect to incidents as to which we are able to test the accuracy of the Fourth Gospel by referring to the narratives in the other Gospels, we are justified in believing that it is also accurate in recording those particulars in our Lord's life and teaching of which the other Gospels, for reasons which are capable of explanation, contain no mention.

We conclude, then, that the Fourth Gospel is a treatise of supreme historical value primarily, as a substantially accurate account of doings and sayings of our Lord while He was on earth, and, in a secondary sense, as an evidence of the views respecting His Divine Person and mission which were held in the Church at the close of the first century.

## APPENDIX

### (To Ch. III. § 3)

OUR Lord's discourse, recorded in ch. xiii. 31 to ch. xvi. 33 of St. John's Gospel, consists of eight distinct paragraphs, namely, those contained in (*a*) ch. xiii. 31 to end; ch. xiv (*b*) 1-14; (*c*) 15-24; (*d*) 25-31; ch. xv (*e*) 1-10; (*f*) 11-16; (*g*) 17 to end; (*h*) ch. xvi. The present arrangement of these paragraphs is defended by some commentators on the hypothesis that chs. xv and xvi were spoken on the way from the Upper Chamber to Gethsemane, and that, in particular, the passage about the Vine in ch. xv. 1-8 was prompted by the Golden Vine on the gate of the Temple, in a Court of which it is suggested that the discourse was continued. This is, no doubt, plausible; and the concluding part of the discourse could not have been delivered to the band of disciples, for them all to hear it, as they were walking along. It, and the prayer which followed it, must, in that case, have been spoken at one or more halts which they made in the course of their walk. Against this view may be set the following considerations:

1. The last seven verses of ch. xiv (25-31) appear clearly to be the winding up of the whole discourse. Verses 25, 26, 30 indicate that they are our Lord's last earthly words to His disciples as a body. Verse 27 contains His parting legacy to them, and verses 28-31 finally sum up His teaching to them about His imminent departure.

2. At the beginning of ch. xvii we read: "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven." What words? Surely the words, "Arise, let us go hence" (ch. xiv. 31). The whole company then rose, and while they were standing, and before they moved, our Lord uttered the prayer recorded in ch. xvii.

3. In ch. xiii. 36 Peter distinctly asks our Lord, "Whither goest Thou?" and this is followed up, in ch. xiv. 5, by



the complaining words of Thomas, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" But in ch. xvi 5 our Lord says, "None of you asketh Me, Whither goest Thou?" It seems clear, therefore, that the passage containing these words must have preceded the passage containing the question of St. Peter and the complaint of St. Thomas. This is confirmed by what is stated in verses 17, 18 about the disciples whispering among themselves as to what our Lord's prediction about His imminent departure meant. They did not venture to address Him openly on the subject until He made the explicit declaration contained in verse 28, which they could not mistake. Still, they knew not how He would go to the Father, and did not inquire about it, until in ch. xvi. 32, 33 and ch. xiii. 33 He had more clearly explained the coming situation. It was then that St. Peter at last put the direct question to Him, "Lord, whither goest Thou" (ch. xiii. 36). We conclude, therefore, that (h) ch. xvi must precede (a) ch. xiii. 31 to end.

4. But the opening of (h) ch. xvi shows that it could not have been the commencement of the discourse. Of all the eight paragraphs, that which is contained in (e) ch. xv. 1-10 appears most naturally and appropriately to follow the opening words of verse 31 of ch. xiii, for it directly refers to the events recorded in that chapter. After washing the disciples' feet, our Lord had declared that they were clean, but not all, Judas being the exception. He has now gone, and therefore our Lord could say without any reservation, "Now ye are clean" (ch. xv. 4). Again, the casting forth of the worthless branch (verse 6) may be regarded as having a distinct, though, of course, not an exclusive reference to Judas. Then, subject to a possible modification as regards paragraph (c) (ch. xiv. 15-24) which will be noticed later on, the rest of ch. xv and the whole of ch. xvi will run straight on, to be followed by ch. xiii. 31, "Now is the Son of Man glorified," etc., to the end of that chapter, and ch. xiv.

5. It is important to consider how the references to the Paraclete which occur in the discourse are affected by this re-

arrangement. Do they contain any indication as to which is their proper order of priority? The references are as follows:

(1) "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may be with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, for it beholdeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him, for He abideth with you and shall be in you" (ch. xiv. 16, 17, R.V.).

(2) "But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you" (ch. xiv. 26, R.V.).

(3) "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of Me" (ch. xv. 26, R.V.).

(4) "It is expedient that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I go, I will send Him unto you. And He, when He is come, will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. . . . Howbeit when the Spirit of Truth is come, He shall guide you into all the truth . . ." (ch. xvi. 7, 13, R.V.).

Opinions may differ as to the order in which these sayings, looked at by themselves, would seem likely to have been uttered. Certainly the first, in which our Lord speaks of the sending of "another Comforter," would appear naturally to have preceded the others in which "the Comforter" is spoken of. It is quite clear that the reference to Him in ch. xvi must have followed one or more of the others. It could not have been the introductory mention of Him. But the same cannot be so positively asserted of the second passage in ch. xiv and the passage in ch. xv; and it is certainly arguable that the reference in ch. xv is the first mention of Him, and that those in ch. xiv are the last two references to Him. In support of this view it may be urged that the words, "He abideth with you and shall be in you" (ch. xiv. 17), would have been incomprehensible to the disciples if spoken before those in ch. xv 1-8, where "abiding" is asserted and insisted on. Our Lord could not have spoken of His Substitute abiding

with them and in them before He had made clear, from the simile of the vine and the branches, the idea of His own abiding in them and their abiding in Him. The cogency of this last argument may be granted, and yet there may be some hesitation in admitting that it outweighs the strong presumption that the mention of "another Comforter" (ch. xiv. 16) must precede all the other passages in which "the Comforter" is alluded to.

Is there any way of reconciling these two conflicting probabilities? There is a way of doing so, if we bear in mind the distinct paragraphs into which the whole discourse is divided, and also the fact that in an earlier part of the Gospel good reason has been found for taking ten verses out of the middle of a chapter (vii. 15-24) and transferring them to another context (see above, Ch. III. p. 24). If this can be justified in one case, the process may be legitimately repeated. If, then, we insert the paragraph (*c*) (ch. xiv. 15-24) between paragraphs (*e*) and (*f*), that is to say, between verses 10 and 11 of ch. xv, we shall make the mention of "another Comforter" the first reference to the Paraclete and at the same time place the idea of His abiding presence not only *after*, but also *in the closest connection with* our Lord's own abiding with His disciples. The whole of ch. xv, with this insertion in it, will read quite as naturally as it at present does without the insertion; and the first fourteen verses of ch. xiv will fit on to the last seven quite suitably without the intermediate verses. Indeed, these first fourteen verses may be regarded as an even more striking immediate preface to the seven concluding verses than is presented by verses 15-24.

It is suggested, then, that the paragraphs in the discourse should be rearranged thus: (*e*) ch. xv. 1-10; (*c*) ch. xiv. 15-24; (*f*) ch. xv. 11-16; (*g*) 17 to end; (*h*) ch. xvi; (*a*) ch. xiii. 31 to end; (*b*) ch. xiv. 1-14; (*d*) 25-31; or, in the alternative, if this readjustment is thought too drastic, then, at any rate, the paragraphs of the discourse should be transposed into the following order: ch. xv, xvi, xiii. 31 to end, xiv.

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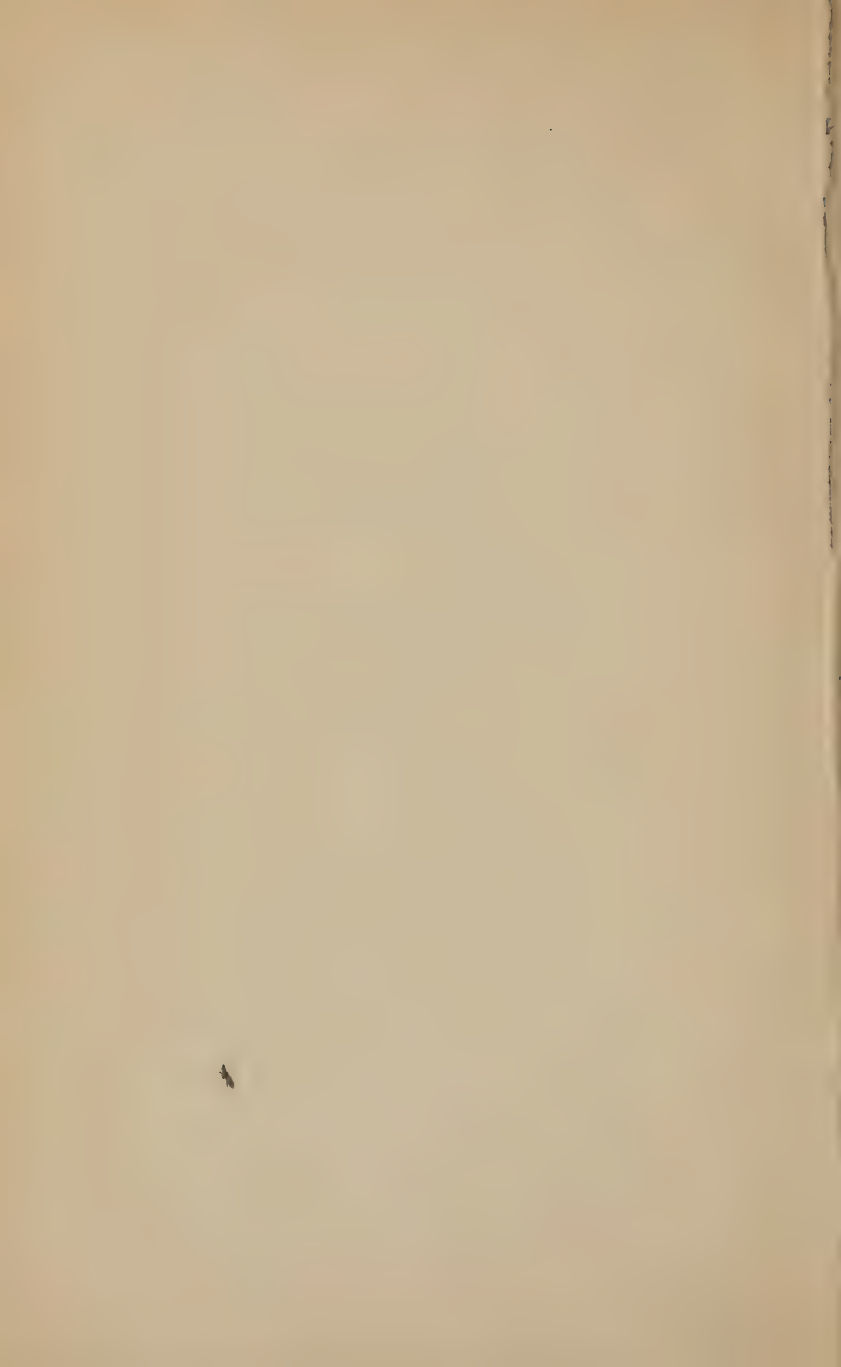
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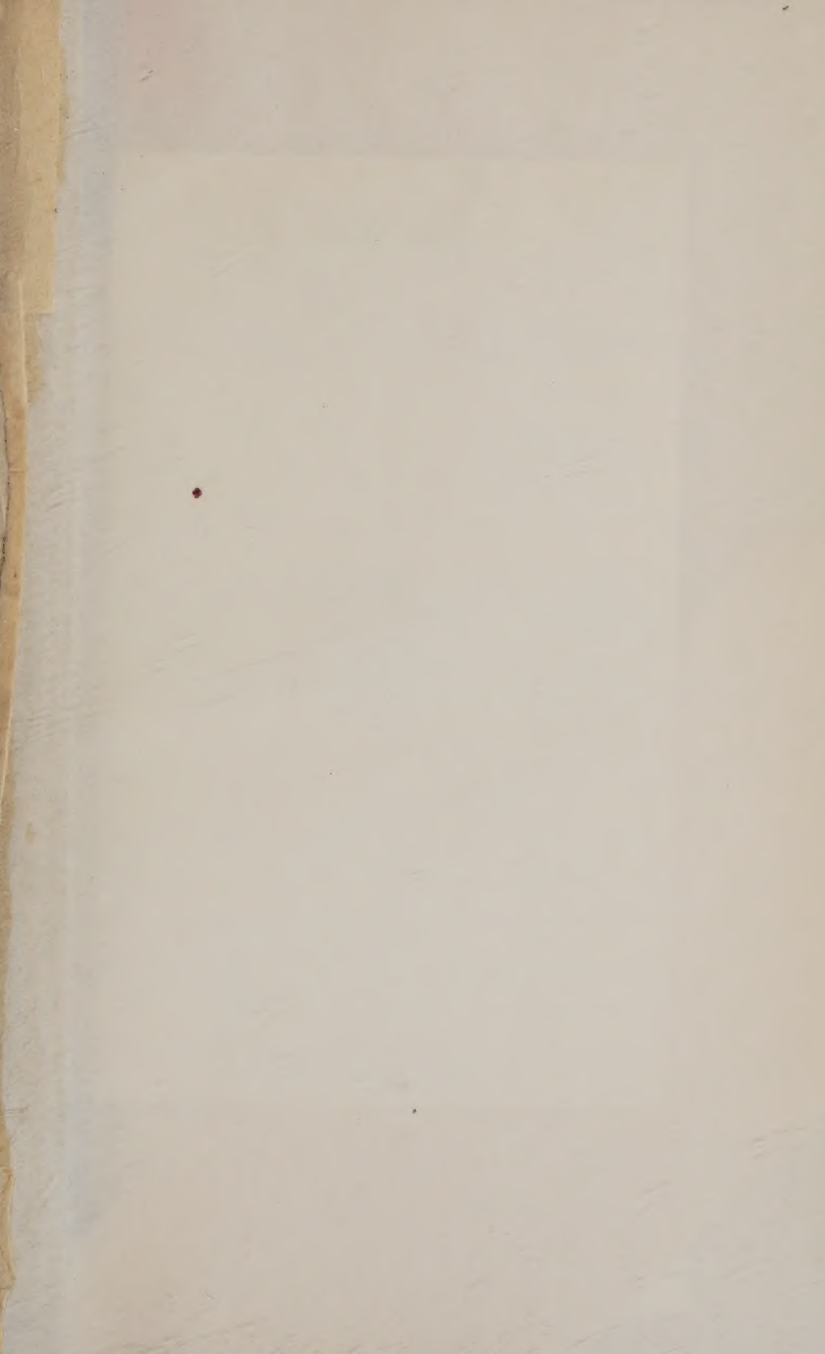
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